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A. Koelle.

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S T E R N E ' S L E T T E R S
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I.
 PREFACE OF THE EDITOR
 OF
 YORICK'S LETTERS.

THE foul and infamous traffic, between dishonest bookfellers, and profligate scribblers, which has subsisted for more than a century, has justly brought posthumous publications under suspicion, in England, France, and more especially in Holland: ministers of state in every European court, great generals, royal mistresses, authors of established reputation, in a word, all such as have had the misfortune to advance themselves to eminence, have been obliged to leave behind them parcels of letters, and other memoirs, of the most secret and important transactions of their times, in which, every fact beyond the information of a news-paper, or coffeehouse-chat, is so faithfully misrepresented, every character delineated with such punctual deviation from the truth, and causes and effects which have no possible relation, are with such amazing effrontery obtruded upon the public, that it is no wonder if men of sense, who read for instruction as well as entertainment, generally condemn them in the lump, never, or very rarely, affording them

the honour of a perusal. — The publisher of these letters, however, has not the smallest apprehension that any part of this well grounded censure can fall to his share; he deals not in surprising events to astonish the reader, nor in characters, one excepted, which have figured on the great theatre of the world; he purposely waves all proofs which might be drawn concerning their authenticity, from the character of the gentleman who had the perusal of the originals, and, with Eliza's permission, faithfully copied them at Bombay in the East Indies; from, the testimony of many reputable families in this city, who knew and loved Eliza, caressed and admired Mr. Sterne, and were well acquainted with the tender friendship between them; from many curious anecdotes in the letters themselves, any one of which were fully sufficient to authenticate them, and submits his reputation to the taste and discernment of the commonest reader, who must, in one view, perceive that these letters are genuine, beyond any possibility of doubt. — As the public is unquestionably entitled to every kind of information concerning the characters contained in these letters, which consists with the duties of humanity and a good citizen, that is, a minute acquaintance with those of whom honourable mention is made, or the publisher is furnished with authorities to vindicate from Mr. Sterne's censures, which as a man of warm temper and lively imagination, he was perhaps sometimes hurried into without due reflection, he persuades

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des himself that no party concerned, will or can be offended with this publication, especially if it is considered that without such information it would be cold and unentertaining; that by publishing their merits he cannot be understood to intend them any injury, and without it, it would in himself fail in his duty to the public. — Eliza, the lady to whom these letters are addressed, is Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, wife of Daniel Draper, Esq. Counsellor at Bombay, and at present chief of the English factory at Surat, — a gentleman very much respected in that quarter of the globe, — she is by birth an East-Indian; but the circumstance of being born in the country not proving sufficient to defend her delicate frame against the heats of that burning climate, she came to England for the recovery of her health, when by accident she became acquainted with Mr. Sterne. He immediately discovered in her a mind so congenial with his own, so enlightened, so refined, and so tender, that their mutual attraction presently joined them in the closest union that purity could possibly admit of; he loved her as his friend, and prided in her as his pupil; all her concerns became presently his; her health, her circumstances, her reputation, her children, were his; his fortune, his time, his country, were at her disposal, so far as the sacrifice of all or any of these might, in his opinion, contribute to her real happiness. If it is asked whether the glowing heat of Mr. Sterne's affection never transported him to a flight beyond

the limits of pure Platonism, the publisher will not take upon him absolutely to deny it; but this he thinks, so far from leaving any stain upon that gentleman's memory, that it perhaps includes his fairest encomium; since to cherish the seeds of piety and chastity in a heart which the passions are interested to corrupt, must be allowed to be the noblest effort of a soul fraught and fortified with the justest sentiments of religion and virtue. — Mr. and Mrs. James, so frequently and honourably mentioned in these letters, are the worthy heads of an opulent family in this city: their character is too well established to need the aid of the publisher in securing the estimation they so well deserve, and universally possess, yet he cannot restrain one observation; that to have been respected and beloved by Mr. Sterne and Mrs. Draper, is no inconsiderable testimony of their merit, and such as it cannot be displeasing to them to see published to the world. — Miss Light, now Mrs. Stratton, is on all accounts a very amiable young lady, — she was accidentally a passenger in the same ship with Eliza, and instantly engaged her friendship and esteem; but being mentioned in one of Mrs. Draper's letters to Mr. Sterne, in somewhat of a comparative manner with herself, his partiality for her, as she modestly expressed it, took the alarm, and betrayed him into some expressions, the coarseness of which cannot be excused. Mrs. Draper declares that this lady was entirely unknown to him, and infinitely superior to his

his idea of her: she has been lately married to George Stratton, Esq. Counsellor at Madras. — The manner in which Mr. Sterne's acquaintance with the celebrated Lord Bathurst, the friend and companion of Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, and all the finest wits of the last age, commenced, cannot fail to attract the attention of the curious reader: here, that great man is social and unreserved, unshackled with that sedulity in supporting a feigned character, which exposes most of his rank to the contempt of wise men, and the ridicule of their valets de chambre; here he appears the same as in his hours of festivity and happiness with Swift and Addison, superior to forms and ceremonies, and, in his eighty-fifth year, abounding in wit, vivacity, and humanity: methinks, the pleasure of such a gentleman's acquaintance resembles that of conversing with superior beings; but it is not fit to dwell longer on this pleasing topic, lest it should anticipate the reader's pleasure in perusing the letter itself. One remark however it suggests, which may be useful to old men in general, namely, that it appears by his Lordship's example, the sour contracted spirit observable in old age, is not specifically an effect of years, altho' they are commonly pleaded in its excuse. Old men would therefore do well to correct this odious quality in themselves; or, if that must not be, to invent a better apology for it. It is very much to be lamented, that Eliza's modesty was invincible to all the publisher's endeavours to

obtain her answers to these letters: her wit, penetration, and judgment, her happiness in the epistolary style, so rapturously recommended by Mr. Sterne, could not fail to furnish a rich entertainment for the public. The publisher could not help telling her, that he wished to God she was really possessed of that vanity with which she was charged; to which she replied, that she was so far from acquitting herself of vanity, that she suspected that to be the cause why she could not prevail on herself to submit her letters to the public eye! for altho' Mr. Sterne was partial to every thing of her's, she could not hope that the world would be so too. With this answer he was obliged to be contented; yet cannot reflect without deep concern, that this elegant accomplishment, so peculiarly adapted to the refined and delicate understandings of ladies should be yet so rare, that we can boast of only one Lady Wortley Montague among us; and that Eliza, in particular, could not be prevailed on to follow the example of that admired lady. — The reader will remark that these letters have various signatures; sometimes he signs Sterne, sometimes Yorick, and to one or two he signs Her Bramin. Altho' it is pretty generally known who the Bramins are, yet lest any body should be at a loss, it may not be amiss to observe, that the principal cast or tribe among the idolatrous Indians are the Bramins, and out of the chief class of this cast comes the priests so famous for their austerities, and the shocking

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ing torments, and frequently death, they voluntarily expose themselves to, on a religious account. Now, as Mr. Sterne was a clergyman, and Eliza an Indian by birth, it was customary with her to call him her Bramin, which he accordingly, in his pleasant moods, uses as a signature. —

It remains only to take some notice of the family, marked with asterisks, on whom Mr. Sterne has thought proper to shed the bitterest gall of his pen. It is however evident, even from some passages in the letters themselves, that Mrs. Draper could not be easily prevailed on to see this family in the same odious light in which they appeared to her perhaps overzealous friend. He, in the heat, or I may say, hurry of his affection, might have accepted suspicious circumstances as real evidences of guilt, or listened too unguardedly to the insinuations of their enemies.

Be that as it may, as the publisher is not furnished with sufficient authorities to exculpate them, he chuses to drop the ungrateful subject, heartily wishing, that this family may not only be innocent of the shocking treachery with which they are charged, but may be able to make their innocence appear clearly to the world; otherwise, that no person may be industrious enough to make known their name.

II.
 PREFACE OF THE EDITOR
 OF
 ELIZA'S LETTERS.

THE editor of the elegant and pathetic letters ,
 from YORICK to ELIZA, which have
 lately made their appearance in the world, says,
 “It is very much to be lamented, that Eliza’s mo-
 “desty was invincible to all the publisher’s endea-
 “vours to obtain her answers to these letters.

“Her wit, penetration, and judgment; her hap-
 “piness in the epistolary style, so rapturously com-
 “mended by Mr. Sterne, could not fail to furnish
 “a rich entertainment for the public — the publisher
 “could not help telling her, that he wished to God,
 “she really was possessed of that vanity with which
 “she was charged.”

We should as sincerely lament Eliza’s invincible
 modesty, as the editor of those letters, if we thought
 her sensibility, in that respect, would preclude the
 publication of such valuable compositions; or if we
 imagined that her too scrupulous partiality for her
 particular friends, or in the most enlarged idea, the
 circle of her acquaintance, ought in justice to impede
 the

the more general gratification of that PUBLIC, who by means of YORICK's letters, addressed to her, must of course become her admirers.

Nor ought Eliza to blame us — the delicate mind is frequently too severe to itself, and abridges its own merit of that fame, which is justly its due.

It is therefore incumbent on the friends of such a being, to break through such partial restrictions, and disobey those orders, which are only the effects of a too timorous sensibility.

To disobey the self-denying rigor of such commands, to put a negative on such bashful delicacy, if I may be allowed the expression, is not only friendly, but even meritorious.

Real merit is always modest, it seeks solitude, would pine in secret, and sink unnoticed into oblivion.

Then surely that person is deserving of applause, or at least the thanks of the public, who draws it from its retirement, brings it to the light for public benefit, and places it in that point of view in which it ought to be conspicuously seen, and to shine for general imitation, and improvement.

Eliza's only objection to the publication of her letters, was; That she thought, "Although Mr.
"Sterne

“Sterne was partial to every thing of her’s, she could
“not hope that the world would be so too.”

But we will venture to affirm, that the world will not think this argument ought to be deemed sufficiently strong, to deprive them of such a valuable entertainment :

For the excellency of the epistles themselves, and the great deference which should be paid to the judgment of Mr. Sterne, are reasons more than sufficient to overturn the objection. — And that once fallen, not a syllable can be justly advanced against this publication.

For a character of Eliza’s letters, take Mr. Sterne’s own words :

“Who taught you the art of writing so sweetly,
“Eliza ? — You absolutely have exalted it to a science.

“When I am in want of ready cash, and ill health
“will permit my genius to exert itself, I shall print
“your letters as finished Essays, by an unfortunate Indian Lady”.

“The style is new, and would almost be a sufficient recommendation, for their selling well, without merit:

“But their sense, natural ease, and spirit, are not
“to be equalled, I believe, in this section of the
“globe

“globe — nor, I will answer for it, by any of your
“countrywomen in your’s.”

Then what a crime would the possessor of such literary jewels, such a mental treasure, have been guilty of, in secluding it from the public, and, like the miser, locking that from the light, which generously diffused, must be pleasing and useful to all.

Nothing but her native diffidence could have induced Eliza to have entertained the least idea of being so unkind, or of wishing her friends to be so selfish.

The curiosity of the public is raised by the publication of Yorick’s letters — it ought to be gratified with the counterpart.

Nay, the lady’s fame is concerned — it is necessary that her answers should be published — it is necessary to secure her reputation from the smallest shadow of censure, to evince before the face of the world, that her ideas were not less pure than her Bramin’s.

The publication of the following letters will prove, that her expressions, tho’ as animated, were no less scrupulously delicate than her Yoricks:

And likewise, that Platonism, so much ridiculed, so long thought a chimera, may exist, and even with the strongest sensibility, and warmest imagination.

Though Eliza was too diffident of her abilities, or nice in her ideas, to oblige the public with her
letters

letters to Yorick, yet she indulged many of her friends with copies of them; — these again gratified many within the circle of their acquaintance with the same favor.

And thus they, in fact, became published; unless the word signifies nothing, without being applied to what issues from the press only.

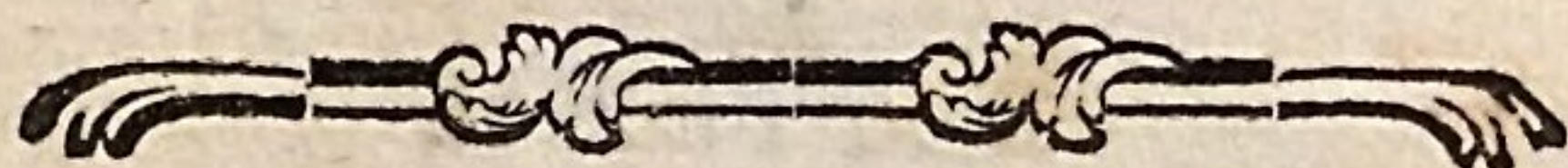
Thus we can only claim the merit of giving a more fair, convenient, and general edition of these elegant epistles, of which we received correct copies from a lady, not more dignified by her rank in life, than elevated by her understanding.

She gave us leave, if we thought proper, to use her name; — but we declined it, thinking the letters sufficient to recommend themselves, and the best testimonies in their own favor:

Agreeable to Mr. Sterne's opinion, concerning Eliza's picture,

“I requested, says he, that you would come
“simple and unadorned, when you sat for me, knowing, as I see with unprejudiced eyes, that you
“could receive no addition from the silk-worm's aid,
“or jeweller's polish.”

Thus we send Eliza's answers to Yorick's epistles into the world, without any recommendation, except their own intrinsic merit.



LETTER I.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

ELIZA will receive my books with this. The sermons came all hot from the heart: I wish that I could give them any title to be offered to yours.— The others came from the head — I am more indifferent about their reception.

I know not how it comes about, but I am half in love with you — I ought to be wholly so; for I never valued, or saw more good qualities to value, or thought more of one of your sex than of you; so adieu,

Yours,

faithfully, if not affectionately,

L. STERNE.

LET-

LETTER II.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY BRAMIN,

I RECEIVED your Sentimental Journey. — Your imagination has strange powers — it has awakened feelings in my heart, which I never knew I possessed — You make me vain — you make me in love with my own sensibility. —

I bedewed your pathetic pages with tears — but they were tears of pleasure — my heart flowed through my eyes — every particle of tenderness in my whole frame was awakened. —

You take the surest method to improve the understanding — you convince the reason, by touching the soul. —

Sure the greatest compliments an author can receive, are the sighs and tears of his readers — such sincere applause I amply gave you.

I beg, if you value me, that you will not flatter me — I am already too vain — and praise from a man of sense is dangerous.

I am in the utmost extent of the word, your

Cordial friend,

ELIZA.

LET-

LETTER III.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

I cannot rest, Eliza, though I shall call on you at half past twelve, till I know how you do.—May thy dear face smile, as thou risest, like the sun of this morning. I was much grieved to hear of your alarming indisposition yesterday; and disappointed too, at not being let in. — Remember, my dear, that a friend has the same right as a physician. The etiquettes of this town, you'll say, say otherwise.—No matter! Delicacy and propriety do not always consist in observing their frigid doctrines.

I am going out to breakfast, but shall be at my lodgings by eleven; when I hope to read a single line under thy own hand, that thou art better, and wilt be glad to see thy

BRAMIN.

9 o'clock.

LET.

LETTER IV.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY BRAMIN.

IT is with pleasure I inform you, that I am better — because I believe it will give you pleasure.

You tell me, “A friend has the same right as a physician.”

Then you may claim a double right — you are my friend, and physician, the most valuable of physicians, the physician of my mind — come then, and bring the best of cordials — the cordial of sentiment — if thy conversation does not eradicate my disorder entirely — it will make me forget that I am ill — I shall feel no pain while you are present.

To wish to see you — you find is the interest, as well as desire of,

Ten o'clock.

E L I Z A.

LET-

LETTER V.

YORICK to ELIZA.

I got thy letter last night, Eliza, on my return from Lord Bathurst's, where I dined, and where I was heard, as I talked of thee, an hour, without intermission, with so much pleasure and attention, that the good old Lord toasted your health three different times; and now he is in his eighty-fifth year, says he hopes to live long enough to be introduced as a friend to my fair Indian disciple, and to see her eclipse all other nabobesses as much in wealth, as she does already in exterior and, what is far better, in interior merit. I hope so too. This nobleman is an old friend of mine. — You know he was always the protector of men of wit and genius; and has had those of the last century, Addison, Steele, Pope, Swift, Prior, &c. &c. always at his table. — The manner in which his notice began of me, was as singular as it was polite. — He came up to me, one day, as I was at the princess of Wales's court. "I want to know you, Mr. Sterne; but it is fit you should know, also, who it is that wishes this pleasure. You have heard, continued he, of an old Lord Bathurst, of whom your Papes and Swifts, have sung and spoken so much: I have lived my life with geniuses of that cast; but have survived them; and, despairing ever to find their equals, it is some years since I have closed my accounts,

and shut up my books, with thoughts of never opening them again: but you have kindled a desire in me of opening them once more before I die; which I now do; so go home and dine with me." — This nobleman, I say, is a prodigy; for at eighty-five he has all the wit and promptness of a man of thirty. A disposition to be pleased, and a power to please others beyond whatever I knew: added to which, a man of learning, courtesy, and feeling.

He heard me talk of thee, Eliza, with uncommon satisfaction; for there was only a third person, and of sensibility, with us. — And a most sentimental afternoon, 'till nine o'clock, have we passed! But thou, Eliza, wert the star that conducted and enliven'd the discourse. — And when I talked not of thee, still didst thou fill my mind, and warmedst every thought I uttered; for I am not ashamed to acknowledge I greatly miss thee. — Best of all good girls! the sufferings I have sustained the whole night on account of thine, Eliza, are beyond my power of words. — Affuredly does Heaven give strength proportioned to the weight he lays upon us! Thou hast been bowed down, my child, with every burden that sorrow of heart, and pain of body, could inflict upon a poor being; and still thou tellest me, thou art beginning to get ease; — thy fever gone, thy sickness, the pain in thy side vanishing also. — May every evil so vanish that thwarts Eliza's happiness, or but awakens thy fears for a moment! —

Fear

Fear nothing, my dear! — Hope every thing; and the balm of this passion will shed its influence on thy health, and make thee enjoy a spring of youth and chearfulness, more than thou hast hardly yet tasted.

And so thou hast fixed thy Bramin's portrait over thy writing desk; and will consult it in all doubts and difficulties. — Grateful and good girl! Yorick smiles contentedly over all thou doest; his picture does not do justice to his own complacency!

Thy sweet little plan and distribution of thy time — how worthy of thee! Indeed, Eliza, thou leavest me nothing to direct thee in; thou leavest me nothing to require, nothing to ask — but a continuation of that conduct which won my esteem, and has made me thy friend for ever.

May the roses come quick back to thy cheeks, and the rubies to thy lips! But trust my declaration, Eliza, that thy husband, if he is the good, feeling man I wish him, will press thee to him with more honest warmth and affection, and kiss thy pale, poor, dejected face, with more transport, than he would be able to do, in the best bloom of all thy beauty; — and so he ought, or I pity him. He must have strange feelings, if he knows not the value of such a creature as thou art!

I am glad Miss Light goes with you. She may relieve you from many anxious moments. — I am glad your ship-mates are friendly beings. You could least dispense with what is contrary to your own nature, which is soft and gentle, Eliza. — It would civilize savages. — Though pity were it thou should'st be tainted with the office! How canst thou make apologies for thy last letter? 'tis most delicious to me, for the very reason you excuse it. Write to me, my child, only such. Let them speak the easy carelessness of a heart that opens itself, any how, and every how, to a man you ought to esteem and trust. Such, Eliza, I write to thee, — and so I should ever live with thee, most artlessly, most affectionately, if providence permitted thy residence in the same section of the globe; for I am, all that honour and affection can make me,

Thy

BRAMIN.

LET.

LETTER VI.

ELIZA to YORICK.

KIND YORICK,

I perused your epistle, as I always do, with infinite pleasure — I am charmed with your account of that worthy nobleman, Lord Bathurst; — half a score of such as him would make old age amiable, redeem it from the character of moroseness, and render it the most desirable period of life.

The company his lordship has kept, and the friendships he has courted, sufficiently evidence his understanding — the manner of his introducing himself to you, at the Princess of Wales's Court, is enough to render his name respectable. —

I am obliged to his lordship for his good opinion of me, though I only shone like the moon with borrowed light — I cannot merit his encomiums — they are not due to myself; but to my picture, as drawn by your brilliant imagination — your kind fancy was the sun, that gave me the light, which his lordship admired. —

You speak with seraphic truth, when you say, heaven gives us strength, proportioned to the weight it lays upon us — I have experienced it — for I found fortitude encrease with my illness — and as my health

decayed, my dependance upon providence grew stronger. —

But I am better — thank heaven — you bid me hope every thing — I do! — Hope is the balm of my soul, the kind foother of my anguish upon all occasions. —

The time approaches for my departure from England — I could wish you to be of the voyage — your conversation would shorten the tedious hours, and smoothe the rugged bosom of the deep. I should find no terrors from the wavering elements, nor dread the dangers that surrounded my floating prison. —

Yet why should I wish to call you from your peaceful retirement, and domestic happiness — to trust the precarious elements, and seek an inclement sky? — Cruel thought Eliza! be content to bear thy Yorick's image in thy mind — and to treasure his instructions in thy heart — then thou wilt be properly sustained against the changes of torture, and dangers of the deep — then thou wilt be in the true sense of the expression,

YORICK'S ELIZA. —

LET-

LETTER VII.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

KIND YORICK,

MY nerves are so weak, and my hand trembles so much, that I am afraid this scrawl will hardly be intelligible—I am extremely ill,—indeed I am.—

I am obliged to exert myself to write this.—Present my kind respects to Mr. and Mrs. James—they are in my heart—they occupy a share of my cordial friendship, with my Bramin—may heaven preserve you all from experiencing the anguish my poor weak being is oppressed with. —

But think not Yorick that I complain—no!—

Bountiful heaven, I thank thee for my afflictions—thou chastifest me for my good,—my poor vain heart had wandered from the thoughts of futurity,—thou hast brought it back, and fixed its attention to the point where it ought to dwell.—O keep me from the sin of repining, and give me strength to bear my afflictions with patience.

The family of the ***s have been with me—they are truly amiable beings—I admire them greatly—they were extremely afflicted at my situation—I believe they felt for me—I am sure they regard me.

I am taken with a strange dizziness—I can say no more, adieu.

ELIZA.

B 5

LET.

LETTER VIII.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

I write this, Eliza, at Mr. James's, whilst he is dressing and the dear girl, his wife, is writing, beside me, to thee. — I got your melancholy billet before we sat down to dinner. 'Tis melancholy indeed, my dear, to hear so piteous an account of thy sickness! Thou art encountered with evils enough, without that additional weight! I fear it will sink thy poor soul, and body with it, past recovery. — Heaven supply thee with fortitude! We have talked of nothing but thee, Eliza, and of thy sweet virtues, and endearing conduct, all the afternoon. Mrs. James, and thy Bramer, have mixt their tears a hundred times, in speaking of thy hardships, thy goodness, thy graces. — The ****s, by heavens, are worthless! I have heard enough to tremble at the articulation of the name. — How could you, Eliza, leave them, or suffer them to leave you rather, with impressions the least favourable? I have told thee enough to plant disgust against their treachery to thee, to the last hour of thy life! Yet still, thou toldest Mrs. James at last, that thou believest they affectionately love thee. — Her delicacy to my Eliza, and true regard to her ease of mind, have saved thee from hearing more glaring proofs of their baseness. — For God's sake write not to them; nor foul thy fair character with such polluted hearts —

They

They love thee! What proof? Is it their actions that say so? or their zeal for those attachments, which do thee honour, and make thee happy? or their tenderness for thy fame? No!—But they weep, and say tender things. — Adieu to all such for ever, Mrs. James's honest heart revolts against the idea of ever returning them one visit. — I honour her, and I honour thee, for almost every act of thy life, but this blind partiality for an unworthy being.

Forgive my zeal, dear girl, and allow me a right which arises only out of that fund of affection I have, and shall preserve for thee to the hour of my death! Reflect, Eliza, what are my motives for perpetually advising thee? think whether I can have any, but what proceed from the cause I have mentioned! I think you are a very deserving woman; and that you want nothing but firmness, and a better opinion of yourself, to be the best female character I know. I wish I could inspire you with a share of that vanity your enemies lay to your charge; though to me it has never been visible, because I think in a well turned mind, it will produce good effects,

I probably shall never see you more; yet I flatter myself you'll sometimes think of me with pleasure; because you must be convinced I love you, and so interest myself in your rectitude, that I had rather hear
of

of any evil befalling you, than your want of reverence for yourself. I had not power to keep this remonstrance in my breast.—It's now out; so adieu. Heaven watch over my Eliza.

Thine,

YORICK.

LETTER IX.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY BRAMIN,

I find myself rather better to-day, my head is easier.

Accept my grateful thanks—make them acceptable to Mr. and Mrs. James—for the concern you have all had upon my account—my overflowing heart thanks ye—though my expressions are too weak to describe its feelings.

You have certainly been misinformed!—I cannot think the *** family really merit the asperity with which you mention it—I cannot think ill of any being, without having had some occasion.—I would not wish to live a slave to suspicion—that were to be

be miserable indeed — I am sensible, my Bramin would not conceive a hard opinion of any one, without some grounds — but he may have been deceived — his good heart may have been too open to the designing — and the ***s misrepresented.

I must be exceedingly troublesome to you — I want your assistance to execute a few commissions — excuse your Eliza — she cannot take that freedom — she cannot trust any person else.

I must intreat, that you would procure directions from Mr. Zumpe, in what manner I am to tune my piano-forte — as I design it to be my harmonious companion, during the voyage.

I should be glad of about a dozen brass screws, to put up in my cabin, as conveniences to hang any thing upon.

I must have a proper journal book, to amuse myself, in minuting the particulars of my voyage.

An arm chair will likewise be useful to me.

Be kind enough to send any parcel for me to the address of Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal.

Though my health improves, I am not intirely at ease in my mind — but let me not give pain to the heart that feels too much for me.

My

My warmest affections to Mrs. James, — she is a dear creature — my respects to Mr. James — heaven bless them both — may the smiles of health and prosperity attend them.

God is my eternal friend, to him I look for protection, and while I breathe the air of mortality, my regards are on you — you are my advisor — my monitor — my better genius — may our reciprocal affections continue pure and unchanged, till the dissolution of our frail beings — and if an intercourse is allowed between the spirits of the departed, may we enjoy that exalted — that refined, etherial rapture — which the ardent seraphims know, while glowing with the emanations of their eternal Creator.

Mayest thou enjoy uninterrupted happiness, till the angel of death wings thee to the regions of bliss,

Adieu,

ELIZA.

LET.

LETTER X.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

TO whom should Eliza apply in her distress, but to her friend who loves her? why then, my dear, do you apologize for employing me? Yorick would be offended, and with reason, if you ever sent commissions to another, which he could execute. I have been with Zumps; and your piano forte must be tuned from the brass middle string of your guittar, which is C.—I have got you a hammer too, and a pair of plyers to twist your wire with; and may every one of them, my dear, vibrate sweet comfort to my hopes! I have bought you ten handsome brass screws, to hang your necessaries upon: I purchased twelve; but stole a couple from you to put up in my own cabin, at Conwould.—I shall never hang, or take my hat off one of them, but I shall think of you. I have bought thee, moreover, a couple of iron screws, which are more to be depended on, than brass, for the globes.

I have written, also, to Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal, that I had dispatched these in a packet, directed to his care; which I desired he would seek after, the moment the Deal machine arrived. I have, moreover, given him directions, what sort of an arm-chair you would want, and have directed him to purchase the best that Deal could afford, and
 • take

take it, with the parcel, in the first boat that went off. Would I could, Eliza, so supply all thy wants and all thy wishes! It would be a state of happiness to me.—The journal is as it should be—all but its contents. Poor, dear, patient being! I do more than pity you; for I think I lose both firmness and philosophy, as I figure to myself your distresses. Do not think I spoke last night with too much asperity of ****; there was cause; and besides, a good heart ought not to love a bad one; and, indeed cannot. But, adieu to the ungrateful subject.

I have been this morning to see Mrs. James.—She loves thee tenderly, and unfeignedly.—She is alarmed for thee.—She says thou looked'st most ill and melancholy on going away. She pities thee. I shall visit her every Sunday, while I am in town. As this may be my last letter, I earnestly bid thee farewell.—May the God of Kindness be kind to thee, and approve himself thy protector, now thou art defenceless! And, for thy daily comfort, bear in thy mind this truth, that whatever measure of sorrow and distress is thy portion, it will be repaid to thee in a full measure of happiness, by the Being thou hast wisely chosen for thy eternal friend.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza; whilst I live, count upon me as the most warm and disinterested of earthly friends.

YORICK.

LET.

LETTER XI.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY BRAMIN.

I have received the box — you have taken a deal of trouble — my heart feels your kindness, and overflows with gratitude.

The ship, I am to sail with, is extremely neat — my cabin is convenient, but small — it is to be painted white; — so I shall be obliged to land, in order to accommodate myself with a lodging. — I shall therefore expect, by every post, a continuance of the happiness which the effusions of my Bramin's fancy, and his preceptive sentiments always give me.

May heaven continue your health for the benefit of mankind, and to bless Eliza, since the effusions of a friendship, at once so delicate and rational, are the most salutary pleasures that can be felt by the sensibility of

ELIZA.

LETTER XII.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

Dear BRAMIN,

This is my birth day—I am twenty-five years of age—yet years, when past, seem but as so many hours—the moments of anguish are the only portions of time, which we can count—we feel their weight—they pass tediously by—we blame them for being tardy, tho' their speed continually takes from the space of our existence.—But how fleeting are the moments in which we enjoy ourselves—they steal unperceived away, and all our pleasures are but short-lived dreams.

To the mind debased by vice, or clouded by doubts, how dreadful must the rapidity of time appear—when every minute takes from their much-loved existence, and leads them to be——“They know not what, they know not where—or, what is worse, sinks them into nothing! Yet even that nothing appears terrible.,, Such is the Sceptic's situation.

But to a soul fond of virtue, and secured by faith, time's swift wings give not a moment's anguish. The good wish to get rid of the incumbrance of clay, and the pains of mortality, they pant for a dissolution—time seems an enemy, who bars their
speedy

speedy passage to that desirable felicity, which is only to be found in the regions of bliss.

The time I have past is nothing — it is now not mine — it is but a blank just stamped upon the memory.

Then let me prize what yet remains behind — let me learn foresight from past miscarriages, and rise to future virtues from former follies — may each revolving sun see me encrease in wisdom, and shine on ripening virtues, till I am fitted for that state which is all purity.

I bow before my afflictions with resignation, and thank the bountiful Author of nature, for sending me such useful monitors.

“Virtue rejoice, tho’ heaven may frown awhile,
That frown is but an earnest of a smile;
One day of tears presages years of joy,
Misfortunes only mend us, not destroy;
Who feel the lashes of an adverse hour,
Find them but means to waft them into pow’r.,,

May heaven bless my friends and enemies, and give me peace of mind.

E L I Z A.

† The above letter was either never answered, or the answer is lost.

LETTER XIII.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

MY DEAREST ELIZA!

I Began a new journal this morning; you shall see it; for if I live not till your return to England, I will leave it you as a legacy. 'Tis a sorrowful page; but I will write chearful ones; and could I write letters to thee, they should be chearful ones too: but few, I fear, will reach thee! However, depend upon receiving something of the kind by every post; till then, thou wavest thy hand, and bid'st me write no more.

Tell me how you fare; and what sort of fortitude Heaven inspires you with. How are you accommodated, my dear? Is all right? Scribble away, any thing, and every thing to me. Depend upon seeing me at Deal, with the James's, should you be detained there by contrary winds. — Indeed, Eliza, I should with pleasure fly to you, could I be the means of rendering you any service, or doing you kindness. Gracious and merciful God! consider the anguish of a poor girl. — Strengthen and preserve her in all the shocks her frame must be exposed to. She is now without a protector, but thee! Save her from all accidents of a dangerous element, and give her comfort at the last.

My

My prayer, Eliza, I hope, is heard; for the sky seems to smile upon me, as I look up to it. I am just returned from our dear Mrs. James's, where I have been talking of thee for three hours. — She has got your picture, and likes it: but Marriot, and some other judges, agree that mine is the better, and expressive of a sweeter character. But what is that to the original? yet I acknowledge that hers is a picture for the world, and mine is calculated only to please a very sincere friend, or sentimental philosopher. — In the one, you are dressed in smiles, and with all the advantages of silks, pearl, and ermine; — in the other, simple as a vestal — appearing the good girl nature made you; which, to me, conveys an idea of more unaffected sweetness, than Mrs. Draper, habited for conquest, in a birth-day suit, with her countenance animated, and her dimples visible. — If I remember right, Eliza, you endeavoured to collect every charm of your person into your face, with more than common care, the day you sat for Mrs. James. — Your colour too, brightened; and your eyes shone with more than usual brilliancy. I then requested you to come simple and unadorned when you sat for me — knowing, as I see with unprejudiced eyes, that you could receive no addition from the silk-worm's aid, or jeweller's polish. Let me now tell you a truth, which, I believe, I have uttered before. — When I first saw you, I beheld you as an object of compassion, and as a very plain woman. The mode of your dress,

tho' fashionable, disfigured you. — But nothing now could render you such, but the being solicitous to make yourself admired as a handsome one. — You are not handsome, Eliza, nor is yours a face that will please the tenth part of your beholders, — but are something more; for I scruple not to tell you, I never saw so intelligent, so animated, so good a countenance; nor was there, nor ever will be, that man of sense, tenderness, and feeling, in your company three hours, that was not, or will not be, your admirer, or friend, in consequence of it; that is, if you assume, or assumed no character foreign to your own, but appeared the artless being nature designed you for. A something in your eyes, and voice, you possess in a degree more persuasive than any woman I ever saw, read, or heard of. But it is that bewitching sort of nameless excellence, that men of nice sensibility alone can be touched with.

Were your husband in England, I would freely give him five hundred pounds, if money could purchase the acquisition, to let you only sit by me two hours in a day, while I wrote my Sentimental Journey. I am sure the work would sell so much the better for it, that I should be reimbursed the sum more than seven times fold. — I would not give nine pence for the picture of you, the Newnhams have got executed. — It is the resemblance of a conceited, made-up coquette. Your eyes, and the shape of your face, the latter the most perfect oval

oval I ever saw, which are perfections, that must strike the most indifferent judge, because they are equal to any of God's works in a similar way, and finer than any I beheld in all my travels, are manifestly injured by the affected leer of the one, and strange appearance of the other; owing to the attitude of the head, which is a proof of the artist's or your friend's false taste. The ****'s, who verify the character I once gave of teasing, or sticking like pitch, or birdlime, sent a card that they would wait on Mrs. **** on Friday. — She sent back, she was engaged. — Then to meet at Ranelagh, to-night. — She answered, she did not go. — She says, if she allows the least footing, she never shall get rid of the acquaintance; which she is resolved to drop at once. She knows them. She knows they are not her friends, nor yours; and the first use they would make of being with her, would be to sacrifice you to her, if they could, a second time. Let her not then; let her not, my dear, be a greater friend to thee, than thou art to thyself. She begs I will reiterate my request to you, that you will not write to them. It will give her, and thy Bramer, inexpressible pain. Be assured, all this is not without reason on her side. I have my reasons too; the first of which is, that I should grieve to excess, if Eliza wanted that fortitude her Yorick has built so high upon. I said I never more would mention the name to thee; and had I not received it, as a kind of charge, from a dear wo-

man that loves you, I should not have broke my word. I will write again to-morrow to thee, thou best and most endearing of girls! A peaceful night to thee. My spirit will be with thee through every watch of it.

Adieu.

LETTER XIV.

ELIZA to YORICK.

Let me see your journal, at least send a copy of it, before I leave England — for far, far off be the time destined for its descending to me as a legacy. — I shall be happy to peruse the sorrowful pages, they humanize the heart — I feel as you felt, when I read what you pen — and that is to feel with the most refined sensibility.

The sympathy of Sentiments bestows the most inexpressible pleasures — such sorrows are sorrows to be coveted — when your page compels the tears from my eyes, and makes my heart throb — I will say; Here my Bramin wept — when he penn'd this passage, he wept — let me catch the pleasing contagion from each heart-felt sentence, and bedew the leaf with mutual streaming sorrows, —

— Then

— Then will I turn to the chearful effusions of thy imagination — then will I revel in the bright fallies of thy wit, and calm the pathetic perturbations of my soul with thy inimitable humour — the big tear shall no longer tremble in my eye — the tender anguish shall no longer heave my heart, but Yorick shall heal the sorrows the Bramin gave.

Such delectable amusements shall gild the tedious hours of my passage — and, by Yorick's assistance, I shall fancy India but half the distance from England that it really is.

A kindly something you promise, by every post — then be assured I shall never wave my hand to stop the silent messenger, but with open arms receive it.

I am considerably better; and, thank heaven, am inspired with a fortitude, which I hope renders me worthy of the name of your disciple, of your friend.

My accomodations are tolerable — I cannot complain.

You say you shall see me at Deal with the James's, should I be detained there by contrary winds.

It has been my Petition, ever since to the supreme Being, to interest the elements in my behalf, that I may once more be indulged with the sight of my friends.

Thus while the captain, the crew, and the other passengers, are wishing for a favourable gale, I am importuning the heavens to deny their prayer, and still to detain the vessel from her proceeding on her destined voyage.

I will not give my opinion concerning my resemblance on canvas, in the various styles, desired by my friends — I sat to oblige them — and would not on any account obtrude a dissenting stricture on their judgment.

But of this they may rest assured, that however the pictures may appear, the original is their's.

You say, when you first saw me, the mode of my dress, tho' fashionable, disfigured me.

I thought so myself — but wore it in compliance with the reigning taste—there is no pride so strong as that which is couched under an affected singularity.

Above all things, I would not wish to appear singular; that is, to be essentially absurd.

When I consider the distinguished friendship, with which you honour me, and reflect on that purity of affection which has interested you in my most trivial concerns, and engaged you to devote your precious moments to my service — I cannot but glory in the compliment you pay me — in saying, “You are “not handsome Eliza — nor is yours a face that will “please the tenth part of your beholders.,,

How

How happy am I not to owe your attachment to frail and fading beauty — but to sentiment alone.

The compliment is the strongest I ever in my life received, or wish to receive — it is not composed of common place flattery, nor paid to the simple features of a face — it is genuine applause — it is paid to the head — to the heart.

Yet I must not indulge any vanity, so far as to take it in its full force to myself — you rather draw me as you are prejudiced in my favour, and partial to my defects.

Yet will I often look on my picture as finished by your hand. — I am persuaded it is what I ought to be. — I will strive to come up to the colouring, in order to be as perfect as my nature will admit, or perhaps as Providence designed I should be, during this sublunary probation.

You mention my husband, that dear name has made the tide of my blood ebb tumultuously towards my heart. — I turn my imagination towards India — sigh at the distance, and could almost unsay all that I have said in the former part of my letter.

But why should I revoke a single sentence, or wish to recall one sentiment — are not love and friendship equally sacred — then learn, Eliza, to keep them both inviolate — to be worthy of such a husband — such a friend!

Yes,

Yes, my Yorick, my husband could grant thee my company — if it could be of service to thee, whilst thou wast continuing thy sentimental journey — he would not deprive mankind of the improvement and pleasure thou art capable of giving them, by denying thee any thing.

Say no more of the ***s — I yield to your ar-
dency — give up every thing to your friendship —
but quit the ingrateful subject — I will not write to
them any more.

I shall impatiently expect your promised letter
to-morrow.

Farewell, thou best of men, and sincerest friend
— may heaven protect thy busy hours, and guard
thy more secluded moments,

Adieu.

Eight o'clock,
Morn.

LET-

LETTER XV.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

KIND YORICK,

I am very happy in the company of Miss L——t, she is an amiable and deserving young lady. — I am thoroughly satisfied that she is to sail with me.

There is to be of the voyage a military officer in the company's service. — He yesterday intruded upon us to tea — I did not chuse to shew any resentment — I rallied him, I told him, that boldness was certainly one of the principal requisites in a soldier.

He excused his incivility, without confessing it with a good grace.

He seems to be greatly taken with Miss L——t, — I dare engage that before we have sailed together the space of a fortnight, he will be in love with her.

The passengers, I am to sail with, are genteel people, and the officers behave with politeness and decorum.

My Yorick, my friend, divides my thoughts with the dear name that duty binds me to. — I often
dream

dream of you — remember me in your prayers — think of me waking, and let me, like an illusion, steal through your fancy, while you sleep. — I am yours — I am yours.

Adieu, adieu.

ELIZA.

P. S. As my stay will be so short, at least in all probability, take every opportunity to write to me — adieu.

LETTER XVI.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

I think you could act no otherwise than you did with the young soldier. There was no shutting the door against him; either in politeness or humanity. Thou tellest me he seems susceptible of tender impressions: and that before Miss Light has sailed a fortnight, he will be in love with her. — Now I think it a thousand times more likely that he attaches himself to thee, Eliza; because thou art a thousand times more amiable. Fivemonths with Eliza; and in the same room; and an amorous son of Mars besides! — “It can no be maffer,” The fun, if

if he could avoid it, would not shine upon a dung-hill; but his rays are so pure, Eliza, and celestial, — I never heard that they were polluted by it. — Just such will thine be, dearest child, in this, and every such situation you will be exposed to, till thou art fixed for life. — But thy discretion, thy wisdom, thy honour, the spirit of thy Yorick, and thy own spirit, which is equal to it, will be thy ablest counsellors.

Surely, by this time, something is doing for thy accommodation. — But why may not clean washing and rubbing do, instead of painting your cabin, as it is to be hung? Paint is so pernicious, both to your nerves and lungs, and will keep you so much longer too, out of your apartment; where, I hope, you will pass some of your happiest hours, —

I fear the best of your shipmates are only genteel by comparison with the contrasted crew, with which thou must behold them. So was — you know who! — from the same fallacy that was put upon the judgment, when — but I will not mortify you. If they are decent, and distant, it is enough; and as much as is to be expected. If any of them are more, I rejoice; — thou wilt want every aid; and 'tis thy due to have them. Be cautious only, my dear, of intimacies. Good hearts are open, and fall naturally into them. Heaven inspire thine with fortitude, in this, and every deadly trial! Best of
God's

God's works, farewell! Love me, I beseech thee;
and remember me for ever!

I am, my Eliza, and will ever be, in the most
comprehensive sense,

Thy friend,

YORICK

P. S. Probably you will have an opportunity of
writing to me by some Dutch or French ship,
or from the Cape de Verd Islands — it will
reach me some how. —

LETTER XVII.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

MY DEAR ELIZA!

Oh! I grieve for your cabin. — And the fresh
painting will be enough to destroy every nerve ab-
out thee. Nothing so pernicious as white lead.
Take care of yourself, dear girl; and sleep not in
it too soon. It will be enough to give you a stro-
ke of an epilepsy.

I hope you will have left the ship; and that
my Letters may meet, and greet you, as you get
out

out of your post.chaise, at Deal. — When you have got them all, put them, my dear, into some order. — The first eight or nine, are numbered: but I wrote the rest without that direction to thee; but thou wilt find them out, by the day or hour, which, I hope, I have generally prefixed to them. When they are got together, in chronological order, sew them together under a cover. I trust they will be a perpetual refuge to thee, from time to time; and that thou wilt, when weary of fools, and uninteresting discourse, retire, and converse an hour with them, and me.

I have not had power, or the heart, to aim at enlivening any one of them, with a single stroke of wit or humour; but they contain something better; and what you will feel more suited to your situation — a long detail of much advice, truth, and knowledge. I hope, too, you will perceive loose touches of an honest heart, in every one of them; which speak more than the most studied periods; and will give thee more ground of trust and reliance upon Yorick, than all that laboured eloquence could supply. Lean then thy whole weight, Eliza, upon them and upon me. “May poverty, distress, anguish, and shame, be my portion, if ever I give thee reason to repent the knowledge of me.” — With this asseveration, made in the presence of a just God, I pray to him, that so it may speed with me, as I deal candidly, and honourably with thee

I would not mislead thee, Eliza; I would not injure thee, in the opinion of a single individual, for the richest crown the proudest monarch wears.

Remember, that while I have life and power, whatever is mine, you may style, and think, your's. Though sorry should I be, if ever my friendship was put to the test thus, for your own delicacy's sake. — Money and counters, are of equal use, in my opinion, they both serve to set up with.

I hope you will answer me this letter; but if thou art debarred by the elements, which hurry thee away, I will write one for thee; and knowing it is such a one as thou would'st have written, I will regard it as my Eliza's.

Honour, and happiness, and health, and comforts of every kind, sail along with thee, thou most worthy of girls! I will live for thee, and my Lydia — be rich for the dear children of my heart — gain wisdom, gain fame, and happiness, to share with them — with thee — and her, in my old age. — Once for all, adieu. Preserve thy life; steadily pursue the ends we proposed; and let nothing rob thee of those powers Heaven has given thee for thy well-being.

What can I add more, in the agitation of mind I am in, and within five minutes of the last postman's bell, but recommend thee to Heaven, and recom-

recommend myself to Heaven with thee, in the same fervent ejaculation "that we may be happy, and meet again; if not in this world, in the next." — Adieu, — I am thine, Eliza, affectionately, and everlastingly.

YORICK.

LETTER XVIII.

ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY YORICK.

I hope your fears, respecting my health, on account of my cabin being new painted, will prove groundless. — But as it will give my Yorick pleasure — I promise to take care of myself, particular care for his sake.

I have received your letters with heartfelt satisfaction — I received them, and have arranged them in chronological order, as you directed me—I found no difficulty in doing it, as the dates supplied any deficiency in the numbering.

I have put them under a cover—I will wear them next my heart — they shall, indeed, be my refuge my kind silent monitors — I will peruse them with

reverence, and obey them with respect — I have already treasured them in my memory, and experienced their efficacy.

While they are animated by knowledge and truth, thy honest heart appears in every line, and makes them glow with sensibility. — Mine reverberates to every sentence, and sympathizes with thine. — I return thy asseveration with equal sincerity, and imprecate the same wrath, if my candour is not equal to thine.

You say. “If thou art debarred by the elements, which hurry thee away, I will write one, a letter, for thee, and knowing it is such a one, as thou wouldst have written, — I will regard it as my Eliza’s.

Do, my Yorick, when I have left the British shore — while I am combating the uncertainty of the boisterous elements — when I can no longer behold the white cliffs of thy native land, a land happy in thy birth, do write a letter for thy Eliza — Stretch thy imagination to its utmost extent — fancy all that is tender, delicate, kind and pure — fancy the most seraphic affection, and believe the powers of thy imagination cannot exceed the dictates of my heart.

You

You ejaculate, "May we be happy, and meet
"again — if not in this world, in the next."

I extend the petition, "May we again meet,
"both here and hereafter."

E L I Z A.

LETTER XIX.

Y O R I C K to E L I Z A.

I wish to God, Eliza, it was possible to postpone the voyage to India, for another year. — For I am firmly persuaded within my own heart, that thy husband could never limit thee with regard to time.

I fear that Mr. B — has exaggerated matters. I like not his countenance. It is absolutely killing. — Should evil befall thee, what will he not have to answer for? I know not the being that will be deserving of so much pity; or that I shall hate more. He will be an outcast, alien. — In which case I will be a father to thy children, my good girl! — therefore take no thought about them. —

But, Eliza, if thou art so very ill, still put off all thoughts of returning to India this year. — Write

D 3

to

to your husband, — tell him the truth of your case. If he is the generous, humane man you describe him to be, he cannot but applaud your conduct. — I am credibly informed, that his repugnance to your living in England, arises only from the dread which has entered his brain, that thou mayst run him in debt, beyond thy appointments, and that he must discharge them — that such a creature should be sacrificed for the paltry consideration of a few hundreds is too, too hard! Oh! my child, that I could, with propriety indemnify him for every charge, even to the last mite, that thou hast been of to him! With joy would I give him my whole subsistence — nay, sequester my livings, and trust the treasures Heaven has furnished my head with, for a future subsistence. —

You owe much, I allow, to your husband, — you owe something to appearances, and the opinion of the world; but, trust me, my dear, you owe much likewise to yourself. — Return therefore, from Deal, if you continue ill. — I will prescribe for you, gratis. — You are not the first woman, by many, I have done so for, with success. I will send for my wife and daughter, and they shall carry you, in pursuit of health, to Montpelier, the wells of Bancois, the Spa, or whither thou wilt. Thou shalt direct them, and make parties of pleasure in what corner of the world fancy points out to thee. We shall fish upon the banks of Arno, and lose ourselves

ves in the sweet labyrinths of its vallies.— And then thou should'st warble to us, as I have once or twice hear'd thee.— “I'm lost, I'm lost”—but we should find thee again, my Eliza. — Of a similar nature to this, was your physician's prescription: “Use gentle exercise, the pure southern air of France, or milder Naples — with the society of friendly gentle beings.” Sensible man! He certainly entered into your feelings. He knew the fallacy of medicine to a creature, whose illness has arisen from the affliction of her mind. Time only, my dear, I fear you must trust to, and have your reliance on; may it give you the health so enthusiastic a votary to the charming goddess deserves.

I honour you, Eliza, for keeping secret some things, which if explained, had been a panegyric on yourself. There is a dignity in venerable affliction, which will not allow it to appeal to the world for pity, or redress. Well have you supported that character, my amiable, philosophic friend! And, indeed, I begin to think you have as many virtues as my uncle Toby's widow. — I don't mean to insinuate, hussy, that my opinion is no better founded than his was of Mrs. Wadman; nor do I conceive it possible for any Trim to convince me it is equally fallacious. — I am sure, while I have my reason, it is not. — Talking of widows — pray, Eliza, if ever you are such, do not think of giving yourself to some wealthy nabob — because I design

to marry you myself. — My wife cannot live long — she has sold all the provinces in France already — and I know not the woman I should like so well for her substitute as yourself. — 'Tis true, I am ninety-five in constitution, and you but twentyfive—rather too great a disparity this! but what I want in youth, I will make up in wit and good humour. — Not Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Maintenon, or Waller his Sacharissa, as I will love, and sing thee, my wife elect! All those names, eminent as they were, shall give place to thine, Eliza. Tell me in answer to this, that you approve and honour the proposal, and that you would, like the Spectator's mistress, have more joy in putting on an old man's flipper than associating with the gay, the voluptuous, and the young. — Adieu, my Simplicia!

Yours,

TRISTRAM.

LET.

LETTER XX.

ELIZA to YORICK.

MY TRISTRAM.

I would oblige you in any thing practicable—with any thing within the line of my duty; — but it is impossible to postpone my voyage — my orders are irrevocable — I must submit.

Mr. B— did not exaggerate — but I am better— my children I therefore hope will not be orphans — but I thank thee, however, for the generosity of thy idea concerning them — it was exalted.

Indeed you have been misinformed concerning my husband's temper — he is not of that parsimonious disposition which you imagine.— If my expenses only were in question, I might continue to breathe the air of Europe — but more tender considerations urge him to press my return to India — I am not made a pecuniary sacrifice.

You allow I owe much to my husband — I follow but the dictates of my duty to discharge that debt — the most sacred debt of which we know, and contracted in the most solemn manner.

I confess much is due to appearances, and the opinion of the world, yet not to wrong those ap-

pearances, and that opinion — not to take from what is due to myself, I would, if circumstances permitted, I would indeed turn from Deal to pay what is due to friendship.

You should prescribe for me — but not corporally — let those do it whose business it is — let them have their perquisites, and fatten on the anguish of the valetudinary, while my Yorick assumed to himself the nobler task of prescribing to the mind, and eradicating the disorders of the soul — that is the task he can perform unrivaled, and for which heaven peculiarly designed him, and lent his talents to benefit an unfeeling — a depraved world.

May thy wife and daughters be better employed, than in administering to the anguish of thy Indian — may they be the means and partakers of thy domestic happiness — if they felt as I feel, they would think every toil a pleasure which gave thee comfort.

I cannot think, let physicians prescribe as they please, that change of place could relieve me — I have tried it from one side of the globe to the other, without success — therefore Britain, and thy converse would certainly prove as efficacious, as the air of France and Naples — but my continuance here will be impossible.

Anguish of mind, as you justly intimate, perhaps, proceeding from too great a degree of sensibility,

sibility, and being constitutionally ailing, will, in my case, baffle the prescriptions of art, and the experience of the most able physicians.

You say, "There is a dignity in venerable affliction, which will not allow it to appeal to the world for pity or redress." — You speak from my heart, you have taken my sentiment — oh! may I never be compelled to seek redress from the world, or be so unfortunate as to merit indiscriminate pity.

If I am pitied — let it be by thee! — Yet I would not wish thee to pity any thing.

Thy worthy heart is so tender, that I am sensible, shouldst thou have occasion to pity any one, that thy anguish would be more severe than that felt by the object of thy sensibility. — I would wish none but the flinty breasted to feel pity, and they are incapable of it.

But you grow merry — you ask, If ever I should become a widow, heaven avert the hour! whether I would marry again? Whether I would give my hand to some rich Nabob.

I think I never should give my hand again — as I am afraid my heart would not go with it. — But as to Nabobs, I despise them all — those who pretend to be Christians, I mean.

Have

Have they not depopulated towns — laid waste villages, and desolated the plains of my native country? — Alas! they have fertilized the immense fields of India, with the blood of its inhabitants — they have sacrificed the lives of millions of my countrymen to their insatiable avarice — rivers of blood stream for vengeance against them — widows and orphans supplicate heaven for revenge.

Then can those spirits, who have waded through blood, to gain riches and power, be congenial with the soul of Eliza, — could Yorick's hapless Indian bear the idea of an union with the murderers of her countrymen — no — shame and poverty be first my portion.

Riches, as the origin of luxury, and support of the gaudy trappings of pride, I condemn. — Gold is beneficial only in the hands of virtue, when the benevolent hand is extended to petitionary distress — or when soft-eyed humanity seeks the cottage of affliction to

“ Shine its superfluity away ” —

to diffuse its blessings around, and bid the big tear of joy start from the eye of sorrow, and trickle down the woe-wan cheeks that begin to glow with the warmth of gratitude.

Yes, my Bramin, were I a widow — and thou a widower — I think I would give my hand to thee,
pre-

preferable to any man existing — I would unite in the purity of heart, with my monitor — I would wed thy soul — my mind should adopt thy sentiments, and become congenial with thy own, and

“My rough genius should at length refine,
Acquiring worth by imitating thine;
With thee I'd wander o'er the historic page,
And view the changing scenes of every age.
Or led by thee, the latest tracts explore
Of grave philosophy's extensive lore;
Or now reclin'd in the Sylvan bow'r,
With peaceful bards, enjoy the blissful hour.”

What matter disparity of years, respecting the mortal part? The soul, that ray of immortality, is always young; and I am certain, thy soul is more vigorous than what the generality of mankind can boast.

If any part of thee is old, it is the most insignificant. — The most valuable part is in all the vernal bloom of youthful prime.

A great poet says,

“For love no certain cause can be assign'd,
‘Tis in no face, but in the lover's mind.”

And may not I improve the idea — may not I say, —

Why

Why should one thought on years unequal waste,
 Love's not in age, but in the lover's taste;
 If time towards the grave the body bring,
 The soul shines forth in all the charms of spring.
 Then let not frail corruption touch my heart,
 I claim the soul, and love th' immortal part.

But rhapsody aside — I hope Mrs. Sterne will out-live every idea of such an union. — You say; She has sold all the provinces in France — I am glad of it — that she may the sooner purchase the fee simple of her health in her native air.

However, I honour thy slipper, and really prefer it to any association with the gay, the voluptuous, and the young — but I would not have Mrs. Sterne put it off too soon, for the sake of thy domestic happiness.

Without joking, I am seriously, and with sincerity, in the utmost purity of affection, thine most unalterably,

ELIZA.

P. S. My heart will beat with impatience for an answer — be expeditious to ease its throbbings.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

YORICK TO ELIZA.

MY DEAR ELIZA!

I have been within the verge of the gates of death. — I was ill the last time I wrote to you; and apprehensive of what would be the consequence. — My fears were but too well founded; for in ten minutes after I dispatched my letter, this poor, fine spun frame of Yorick's gave way, and I broke a vessel in my breast, and could not stop the loss of blood till four this morning. I have filled all thy India handkerchiefs with it. — It came, I think, from my heart! I fell asleep, through weakness. At six I awoke; with the bosom of my shirt steeped in tears. I dreamt I was sitting under the canopy of Indolence, and that thou camest into the room, with a shawl in thy hand, and told me, my spirit had flown to thee in the Downs, with tidings of my fate; and that you were come to administer what consolation filial affection could bestow, and to receive my parting breath and blessing. — With that you folded the shawl about my waist, and, kneeling, supplicated my attention. I awoke; but in what a frame! Oh! my God! my God! “But thou wilt number my tears, and put them all into thy bottle.” — Dear girl! I see thee, — thou art for ever present

scent to my fancy, embracing my feeble knees, and raising thy fine eyes to bid me be of comfort: and when I talk to Lydia, the words of Esau, as uttered by thee, perpetually ring in my ears — “Bless me even also, my father!” — Blessing attend thee, thou child of my heart!

My bleeding is quite stopped, and I feel the principle of life strong within me, so be not alarmed, Eliza — I know I shall do well. I have eaten my breakfast with hunger; and I write to thee with a pleasure arising from that prophetic impression in my imagination, that “all will terminate to our heart’s content.” Comfort thyself eternally with this persuasion, “that the best of beings, as thou hast sweetly expressed it, could not, by a combination of accidents, produce such a chain of events, merely to be the source of misery to the leading person engaged in them.” The observation was very applicable, very good, and very elegantly expressed. I wish my memory did justice to the wording of it. — Who taught you the art of writing so sweetly, Eliza? — You have absolutely exalted it to a science! When I am in want of ready cash, and ill health will permit my genius to exert itself, I shall print your letters, as finished essays, “by an unfortunate Indian lady.” The style is new; and would almost be a sufficient recommendation for their selling well, without merit — but their sense, natural ease, and spirit, is not to be equalled, I believe,

believe, in this section of the globe; nor, I will answer for it, by any of your country women in your's. — I have shewed your letter to Mrs. B —, and to half the literati in town. — You shall not be angry with me for it, because I meant to do you honour by it. — You cannot imagine how many admirers your epistolary productions have gained you, that never viewed your external merits. I only wonder where thou could'st acquire thy graces, thy goodness, thy accomplishments — so connected! so educated! Nature has, surely, studied to make thee her peculiar care — for thou art, and not in my eyes alone, the best and fairest of all her works.—

And so, this is the last letter thou art to receive from me; because the Earl of Chatham, I read in the papers, is got to the Downs; and the wind, I find, is fair. If so — blessed woman! take my last, last farewell! — Cherish the remembrance of me; think how I esteem, nay, how affectionately I love thee, and what a price I set upon thee! Adieu, adieu! and with my adieu — let me give thee one straight rule of conduct, that thou hast heard from my lips in a thousand forms — but I concenter it in one word,

REVERENCE THYSELF.

Adieu, once more, Eliza! May no anguish of heart plant a wrinkle upon thy face, till I behold

it again! May no doubt or misgivings disturb the serenity of thy mind, or awaken a painful thought about thy children — for they are Yorick's — and Yorick is thy friend for ever! Adieu, adieu, adieu!

P. S. Remember, that Hope shortens all journeys, by sweetening them; — so sing my little stanza on the subject, with the devotion of an hymn, every morning when thou arisest, and thou wilt eat thy breakfast with more comfort for it.

Blessings, rest, and Hygeia go with thee! May'st thou soon return, in peace and affluence, to illumine my night! I am, and shall be, the last to deplore thy loss, and will be the first to congratulate, and hail thy return. —

FARE THEE WELL!

LET.

LETTER XXII.
ELIZA TO YORICK.

MY BRAMIN,

This is the last letter thou wilt receive from me, while I am within sight of the British shore — the land of freedom, and benevolence — the land which, to its own glory be it spoken, gave my Yorick being.

I was terrified when I opened your last letter; — your illness gave me the most genuine concern.

To break a blood vessel in thy breast — dreadful! — I was alarmed at the intelligence, and my blood thrilled in my veins, and curdled near my heart, when I read it.

O that my India handkerchiefs had been styptic, to give thee ease. — I was happy to read you had slept — but your dream — heaven render it prophetic — heaven keep me from the painful office of administering to your dissolution.

Thy tears I will treasure in my bottle, or at least, I will weep for thee — fill it with my tears, and call them thine, as they are unfeignedly shed upon thy account.

Your imagination images to my feelings — you behold me in fancy in the very supplicating posture I should assume, were I near you—I should embrace! embrace! your knees, and look as if I bade

you be of comfort — for I should only look — I should be unable to speak.

I join with thee in blessing the child of thy heart — thy Lydia.

And all praise be given to that bountiful Being, who has healed thy disorder, and stopped thy bleeding — who bade thee again “feel the principle of “life strong within thee.”

All will certainly terminate to our hearts content — to think otherwise, is to entertain an ill opinion of an omnipotent Being — who is all wise — all merciful, and all good, whose benignity is equal to his power, and both are unbounded.

You may inquire, who taught me the art of writing — it was even my Yorick! — if I have any claim to merit — if my style is, as you are pleased to say, new — if the ease and spirit of my compositions are not to be equalled — the praise is entirely due to yourself.

I have taken the utmost pains to steal your sentiments — your manner — the delicacy of your expressions — the easy flow of your thoughts — the purity of your diction — in fine, I have in my writings aimed as much as possible to be Yorick.

But I cannot think my style equal to what your prejudice in my favour persuades you it is; — I can perceive manifest faults in my compositions myself. I am not laying a trap for future plaudits, indeed I am not. — I beg that our correspondence may be
from

from the heart, not of the heart; — therefore no compliments.

I must, however, chide — I must, my Yorick, — for shewing my letters. — You tell me, you have shewn them to Mrs. B —, and to half the literati in town; — indeed you have been to blame — so to expose your Eliza's weakness.

She bares her heart to thee — she lays it entirely open — but she would not have it shewn so naked to every one in the fullness of her sincerity. — Many things may slip from her unsuspecting pen, which she would not have known to any one, who could not, like thee, make great allowances in her favor — and pardon the weakness of her nature.

You say, “You cannot imagine how many admirers your epistolary productions have gained you.”

False flattery! — Their encomiums are illusive — it is to you their compliments are paid — they find you are blind to my errors — they perceive you implicitly admire all that comes from me — they pretend to coincide with your opinion, not to give you any uneasiness — they admire — they reverence you — they will not mortify you, by declaring that any being you are pleased to think perfect, is not so.

It is the respect due to the merits of my Yorick, that occasions the many compliments paid to the trifling deserts of his Eliza.

We are in the Downs — the wind is fair — we shall sail this evening — the captain has just informed

me so — I therefore took this opportunity to pour the effusions of my heart to thee in haste.

Farewell, worthiest of men — feeling being, thou art all sentiment — farewell — I will — I will cherish the remembrance of thee! — You tell me how you esteem me — how affectionately you love me — what a price you set upon me.

I esteem thee with equal ardor — I love thee with equal affection — I prize thee as ardently — let me be ever dear to thy heart — and an inhabitant of thy memory.

I will reverence myself for my Yorick's sake — I will, my Yorick, who is my friend for ever.

I will sing thy little stanza to Hope in my matin and evening orisons — yet I cannot help deploring our separation.

Farewell, my Bramin — my faithful monitor, Farewell.

May prosperity attend thee, and peace crown thy days with felicity.

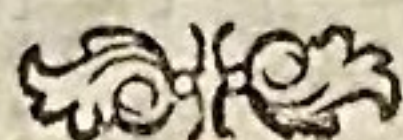
Thine affectionately,

Thine everlastingly,

Adieu, adieu, adieu,

ELIZA.

P. S. I will, if possible, write by some ship bound to England,



STERNE'S LETTERS

TO

HIS FRIENDS

ON

VARIOUS OCCASIONS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

HIS HISTORY

OF A

WATCH COAT,

WITH

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON,

Printed for A. T. TAYLOR

1788.

STEELE'S EYE

TO

HIS FRIENDS

OR

VARIOUS OCCASIONS

TO WHICH IS ADDED

HIS HISTORY

OF A

WATCH COAT

WITH

EXPLANATORY NOTES

A NEW EDITION

LONDON

Printed for A. T. Taylor

1782

INTRODUCTION.

The ensuing letters have been some years in the possession of the Editor; their publication was deferred, as he was in daily expectation that time and opportunity would happily have been productive of a larger acquisition; but despairing of any further success, he has ventured to present them to the public, with whom he must sincerely regret the loss we sustain by not retrieving a larger correspondence.

The odious light in which many posthumous publications are deservedly viewed, by the discerning few, would have sunk these letters in oblivion, if they had reflected the least discredit on the morals or literary merit of an author who so justly deserves the very distinguished attention he has received; but, on the contrary, as they reflect honour on the author in every capacity, and place him in the most pleasing point of view, and as they carry with them evident and convincing marks of ori-

ginality, he thinks the most incredulous must applaud his undertaking, and be fully satisfied of their authenticity, as he would be always happy to add to, rather than diminish the lustre of literary fame; thinking it almost as criminal to commit a literary as a corporal murder.

Some apology may be thought necessary for subjoining the last letter, as it has already appeared in a small pamphlet about seven years ago; but as it was never attended to for want of being sufficiently known, the editor hopes the public will unite with him in wishing not a dash of his author's pen might be lost; for which reason he could not resist the temptation of preserving it, though it might be of a temporary nature. — The following account of it is taken from some anecdotes of Mr. Sterne's life, lately published, and prefixed to the before-mentioned pamphlet, as an advertisement.

— “For some time Mr. Sterne lived, in a retired manner, upon a small curacy in Yorkshire, and, probably, would have remained in the same
obscu-

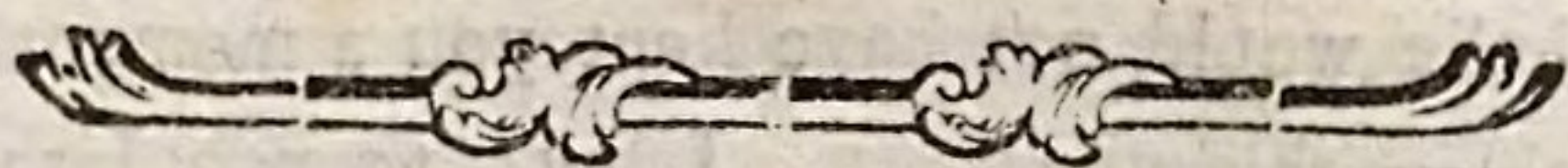
obscurity , if his lively genius had not displayed itself upon an occasion which secured him a friend, and paved the way for his promotion. — A person who filled a lucrative benefice, was not satisfied with enjoying it during his own life-time , but exerted all his interest to have it intailed on his wife and son after his decease : the gentleman that expected the reversion of this post was Mr. Sterne's friend, who had not, however , sufficient influence to prevent the success of his adversary. — At this time Sterne's satirical pen operated so strongly, that the intended monopolizer informed him, if he would suppress the publication of his sarcasm, he would resign his pretensions to the next candidate."

The title of this piece , it appears , was to have been , "The History of a good warm Watch Coat, "with which the present Possessor is not content to "cover his own shoulders, unless he can cut out "of it, a Petticoat for his Wife , and a pair of "Breeches for his Son."

Whenever genius is distinguished, it will, naturally, excite our attention. — No man ever claimed

a greater right to that attention than the author of *Tristram*: — a natural vivacity, united with a sentimental delicacy, and a tenderness felt by every susceptible soul, deserves commendation: we must rank Sterne as one of the most celebrated originals. “He plays with the fancy, and sometimes, perhaps, too wantonly; but, while he thus designedly masks his main attack, he comes at once upon the heart, refines it, amends it, softens it, beats down each selfish barrier from about it, and opens every source of pity and benevolence.” — This is the true characteristic of our Author, whose poignant wit, and sentimental tenderness, will ever immortalize his memory, while taste exists; and, though I must, unwillingly, subscribe to the opinion of my Author, that “It is not in the power of every one to taste humour, however he may wish it. — It is the gift of God;” — yet, I trust, the majority of my readers are possessed of that gift, and will heartily rejoice, with me, in the opportunity of preserving these marks of genius, and handing them to posterity.

LET-



* LETTER I.

Thursday 11 'Clock at Night.

DEAR SIR,

— 'T was for all the world like a cut across my finger with a sharp knife — I saw the blood — gave it a suck — wrapt it up — and thought no more about it —

— But there is more goes to the healing of a wound than this comes to; — a wound, unless it is a wound not worth talking of, but by the - bye mine is, must give you some pain after — nature will take her own way with it — it must ferment — it must digest —

— The story you told me of Tristram's pretended tutor this morning — (My letter, by rights, should have set out with this sentence — and then the

* A friend of the Author of the Divine Legation suspecting, from report, that Sterne had a design to make that learned prelate Tristram's Tutor, in the continuation of his work; hinted his suspicions to him in a letter, to which this is an answer.

the simile would not have kept you a moment in suspense) — this vile story, I say, though I then saw both how and where it wounded — I felt little from it at first — or, to speak more honestly, though it ruins my simile, I felt a great deal of pain from it, but affected an air usual on such accidents, of less feeling than I had —

I have now got home to my lodgings, and have been unwrapping this self-same wound of mine, and shaking my head over it this half hour. — What the devil! — Is there no one learned blockhead throughout the many schools of misapplied science in the christian world to make a tabour of for my Tristram? — *Ex quo vis ligno non fit.* — Are we so run out of stock, that there is no one lumber-headed, muddle-headed, mortar-headed, pudding-headed chap amongst our doctors? — Is there no one single wight, of much reading and no learning, amongst the many children in my mother's nursery, who bids high for this charge, but I must disable my judgment by choosing a W —? — Vengeance! have I so little concern for the honour of my hero? Am I a wretch so void of sense, so bereft of feeling for the figure he is to make in story, that I should choose a preceptor to rob him of all the immortality I intended him? O my dear friend!

Malice is ingenious — unless where the excess of it out-wits itself — I have two comforts in this stroke

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ke of it;— the first is, that this one is partly of this kind; and secondly, that it is one of the number of those which so unfairly brought poor Yorick to his grave. — The report might draw blood of the Author of Tristram Shandy — but could not harm such a man as the Author of the Divine Legation — God blefs him! though by-the-bye, and according to the natural course of descents, the blessing should come from him to me.

Pray have you no interest lateral or collateral to get me introduced to his Lordship?

Why do you ask?

My dear Sir, I have no claim to such an honour, but what arises from the honour, and respect, which, in the progress of my work, will be shewn the world I owe to so great a man. Whilst I am talking of owing—I wish, dear Sir, that any body would tell you—how much I am indebted to you — I am determined never to do it myself, or say more upon the subject than this, that I am yours,

LAWRENCE STERNE.

LET-

LETTER II.

From Dr. Eustace in America, to the Rev.
Mr. Sterne, with a Walking Stick.

SIR!

When I assure you that I am a great admirer of Tristram Shandy, and have, ever since his introduction into the world, been one of his most zealous defenders against the repeated assaults of prejudice and misapprehension, I hope you will not treat this unexpected appearance in his company as an intrusion.

You know it is an observation, as remarkable for its truth as for its antiquity, that a similitude of sentiments is the general parent of friendship. — It cannot be wondered at, that I should conceive an esteem for a person whom nature had most indulgently enabled to frisk and curvet with ease through all these intricacies of sentiments, which from irresistible propensity, she had impelled me to trudge through without merit or distinction.

The only reason that gave rise to this address to you, is my accidentally having met with a piece of true Shandean statuary, I mean according to vulgar opinion, for to such judges both appear equally destitute of regularity or design. — It was made by a
very

very ingenious gentleman of this province, and presented to the late Governor Dobbs, after his death Mrs. D. gave it me: its singularity made many desirous of procuring it, but I had resolved, at first, not to part with it, till, upon reflection, I thought it would be a very proper and probably not an unacceptable compliment to my favourite author, and in his hands might prove as ample a field for meditation as a button-hole, or a broomstick.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

LETTER III.

Mr. Sterne's Answer.

London, Febr. 9, 1768.

SIR,

I this moment received your obliging letter and Shandean piece of sculpture along with it, of both which testimonies of your regard I have the justest sense, and return you, dear Sir, my best thanks and acknowledgement. Your walking stick is in no sense more Shandaick, than in that of its having more handles than one; the parallel breaks only in this, that in using the stick every one will take the hand-

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le which suits his convenience. In *Tristram Shandy* the handle is taken, which suits the passions, their ignorance, or their sensibility. There is so little true feeling in the herd of the world, that I wish I could have got an act of parliament, when the books first appeared, that none but wise men should look into them. It is too much to write books, and find heads to understand them; the world, however, seems to come into a better temper about them, the people of genius here, being to a man on its side; and the reception it has met with in France, Italy, and Germany, has engaged one part of the world to give it a second reading. The other, in order to be on the strongest side, has at length agreed to speak well of it too. A few hypocrites and tartuffes, whose approbation could do it nothing but dishonour, remain unconverted.

I am very proud, Sir, to have had a man like you on my side from the beginning; but it is not in the power of every one to taste humour, however he may wish it; it is the gift of God: and, besides, a true feeler always brings half the entertainment along with him; his own ideas are only called forth by what he reads, and the vibrations within him, intirely correspond with those excited. — 'Tis like reading himself — and not the book.

In a week's time I shall be delivered of two volumes of the *Sentimental Travels of Mr. Yorick* through

through France and Italy; but, alas! the ship sails three days too soon, and I have but to lament, it deprives me of the pleasure of presenting them to you. —

Believe me, dear Sir, with great thanks for the honour you have done me, with true esteem,

Your obliged humble servant,

LAWRENCE STERNE.

LETTER IV.

To * * * * *

It is even as you told me, my good friend, — a beckon from an old female acquaintance has led me a dance to * * * * *. It was too great a temptation to be thrown in the way of such a sinner; — so I have bid adieu to Shandy Hall till the beginning of October — which, by-the-bye, is one of the finest months in the year in this part of the kingdom — this is added, by the way, to induce you to return to me at that time: if you cannot, let me know where you are to be the beginning of the following month, and the wheels of my chariot shall roll rapidly towards you.

I have not been quite idle since you left me, but, amidst a thousand impediments, have snatched one volume more for a gouty and a splenetic world. I suppose this will overtake you at the Hot-wells, as you are walking a sentimental foot-pace beside some phthysical nymph of the fountain — if so — protect and cherish her, whosoever she be; and tell her, that she has Tristram Shandy's wishes for her recovery and happiness. — Had I lived in days of yore, when virtue and sentiment bore a price, I should have been the most peerless knight of them all! — Some tender-hearted damsel in distress would ever have been my object: to wipe away the tears from off the cheek of such a friendless fair one, I would go to Mecca — and for a friend — to the end of the world. —

In this last sentiment my best friend was uppermost in my thoughts!

But wherefore do I think of arms and Dulcineas, — when, alas, my spear is grown rusty, and is fit only to be hung in the old family hall, among pistols without cocks, and helmets that have lost their vizard.

As for my health, which you so kindly inquire after — I cannot brag of it — it is not so well with me this year as it was the last — and I fear I have little on my side but laughter and good spirits! These

se have stood me in great stead for twenty years past, how long they may be able to keep the field, and prolong the combat — for at best it is but prolonging a contest, which must at last end in their defeat, — I know not! — Nevertheless, for the days that are past, as well as those which are to come, I will eat my bread in peace: and be it but bread and water, and I have such a friend as you, I will find a way, some how or other, to make merry over it.

Adieu,

LAWRENCE STERNE.

LETTER V.

To * * * * *

— The first time I have dipped my pen into the inkhorn is to write to you — and to thank you most sincerely for your kind epistle! — Will this be a sufficient apology for my letting it lay ten days upon the table without answering it? — I trust it will; — I am sure my own feelings tell me so; — because I feel it to be impossib'le for me to do any thing that is ungracious towards you. It is not every hour, or day, or week, in a man's life, that is a fit season

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for the duties of friendship: — sentiment is not always at hand — folly and pride, and what is called business, oftentimes keep it at a distance: and without sentiment, what is friendship? — a name! — a shadow! — But, to prevent a misapplication of all this, though why should I fear it from so kind and gentle a spirit as yours? you must know, that by the carelessness of my curate, or his wife, or his maid, or some one within his gates, the parsonage-house at — was, about a fortnight ago, burnt to the ground, with the furniture which belonged to me, and a pretty good collection of books — the loss about three hundred and fifty pounds. — The poor man, with his wife, took the wings of the next morning and fled away. — This has given me real vexation; — for so much was my pity and esteem for him, that as soon as I heard of the disaster, I sent to desire he would come and take his abode with me, till another habitation was ready to receive him, — but he was gone; and, as I am told, for fear of my persecution — Heavens! how little did he know me, to suppose; that I was among the number of those wretches, who heap misfortune on misfortune, — and when the load is almost insupportable still add to the weight. — God, who reads my heart, knows it to be true, that I wish rather to share than to increase the burden of the miserable, — to dry up instead of adding a single drop to the stream of sorrow. — As to the dirty trash of this world, I regard it not; the loss of it does not cost me a sigh —
for

for, after all, I may say with the Spanish Captain, that I am as good a gentleman as the King, only not quite so rich. — But to the point. —

Shall I expect you here this summer? I much wish that you may make it convenient to gratify me in a visit for a few weeks. I will give you a roast fowl for your dinner, and a clean table cloth every day; and tell you a story by way of desert. — In the heat of the day we will sit in the shade; and in the evening the fairest of all the milk-maids, who pass by my gate, shall weave a garland for you.

If I should be so unfortunate as not to see you here, do contrive, to meet me the beginning of October — I shall stay here about a fortnight, and then seek a kinder climate. — This plague cough of mine seems to gain ground, and will bring me at last to my grave, in spite of all I can do; but while I have strength to run away from it, I will! — I have been wrestling with it for these twenty years past; and 'twas with laughter and good spirits I have prevented its giving me a fall; but my antagonist presses me closer than ever, and I have nothing left on my side but another journey abroad! — apropos, — are you for a scheme of that sort? — If not — perhaps you will accompany me as far as Dover, that we may laugh together upon the beach, to put Neptune in good humour, before I embark. — God bless you —

Adieu,

LAWRENCE STERNE.

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LETTER VI.

To * * * * *

I have been much concerned at your overthrow; but our roads are ill contrived for the airy vehicles now in fashion. May it be the last fall you ever meet with in this world! — But this reflection costs me a deep sigh — and I fear, my friend, you will get over it no cheaper. — Many, many are the ups and downs of life, and fortune must be uncommonly gracious to that mortal who does not experience a great variety of them: — though perhaps to these may be owing as much of our pleasures as our pains: there are scenes of delight in the vale as well as in the mountain; and the inequalities of nature may not be less necessary to please the eye — than the varieties of life to improve the heart. At best we are but a short-sighted race of beings, with just light enough to discern our way,—to do that is our duty, and should be our care; when a man has done this, he is safe, the rest is of little consequence —

Cover his head with a turf or a stone,
It is all one, it is all one!

— I visited my abbey, as usual, every evening — amid the mouldering ruins of ancient greatness I take my solitary walk; far removed from the noise and bustle of a malicious world, I can cherish the fond

re-

remembrance of my Cordelia. Cordelia! — thou wert kind, gentle, and beauteous! thy beauties, rather let me say thy misfortunes, first raised the flame of tender affection in my breast! — But thy beauties, and thy misfortunes, are passed away together; and all that charmed mankind, and delighted me, become a clod of the valley! — Here, my Cordelia, I will weed clean thy grave — I will stretch myself upon it — will wet it with tears — and the traveller shall not turn aside to observe me. —

But whither am I led? Do, my kind friend, excuse the wanderings of my pen; it governs me, I govern not it — Farewel; and receive the warmest affection of,

LAWRENCE STERNE.

LET-

LETTER VII.

To * * * * *

— **I** Fear, that ere this, you may have oftentimes accused me of negligence, in not answering your last letters; but you addressed them to me in London, and I was dying in the country. — I have been more sorely afflicted this last time than I ever was before: had I followed the advice of the faculty, it had been over with me; and, contrary to their opinion, I ventured to order myself a stout bleeding; — this, in all probability, saved me; for how long, God only knows! — I am still weak, and can hardly make myself heard across my table. — My spirits, the best friends I ever had in this world, stuck close by me in this last conflict; by their kind assistance I have been able to bear the heavy load of life, and walk so merrily along the wilderness of this world: — thanks to them I have been able to whistle and sing in its most uncheery paths! — As it has pleased heaven to let them accompany me thus far on my journey, I hope and trust they will not be suffered to leave me now that I am almost at the end of it. — I know and feel, my friend, that this last sentiment will give you pain! — this, believe me, is most foreign to my wishes; but I always write from my heart — and supposing it to be my practice, to cheat the world, I have ever considered the character of a friend too respectable to make the sport

sport of an idle imagination. To deceive is a base trade at best; — but to deceive those we love and value, is a folly so totally inexcusable, that I defy all the arts of sophistry to frame an argument in its favour. — When I open my heart — I shew all its follies — its caprices — its wantonness — its virtues are all exposed to view; and though by this means I lay myself open to the illiberal and the ill-natured, who are ever ready to seize the opportunity of gratifying their dirty passions; and withal are so numerous, that hypocrisy, with respect to them, is accounted a virtue. — But I shew all! this may be imprudent — and I am told by some sentimental prudes — that it is indecent; — if so, let them put their fans before their faces, or walk on the other side of the way. — Disguise is the fashion; and the man who does not use it, is called a Libertine: — for my part — I hate a mask, and will never wear one! I am not ashamed of my failings, while I feel that I have some little stock of virtue to counterbalance them. — The man who hides nothing, who varnishes nothing, when applause, when honour comes, and come it must to such, finds no busy something in his breast that gives the lie to it. — 'Tis his own, — and his heart will answer it. — Of all sycophants, scourge me those who flatter themselves! — He who speaks peace to himself, when there is no peace, is acting a part he cannot long support — the scene closes — the curtain drops — and he is himself again. The follies, the errors of mankind,

I sincerely forgive, as I hope to be forgiven; — and when a man is mounted on his hobby-horse, let him amble or trot, or gallop, so he will be quiet, and not let his heart do mischief. — God speed him! — And if I feel an inclination to put on my fool's cap, and jingle the bells for two or three hours of the four-and-twenty — or the whole twenty-four hours together — what is that to any one? — O, Sir, you will be called trifling, foolish, &c. &c. — with all my heart! — Pray, good folks, fall on — never spare! — Fair ladies, have you got your bellies full? — if so, much good may it do you! — But, Sir, we must prove you to be a rogue, a rascal, an hypocrite. — Alas! I have nothing to give you but my fool's cap and my hobby-horse; — if they are not sufficient, I must beg leave to recommend you to that pale-faced, solemn, stiff-starched figure who is this moment entering that church; fall upon him! — and for once in your lives, perhaps, you may hit the mark.

I fear, my good friend, you will begin to think, that however my speaking faculties are obstructed, that one of writing still remains free and large; — but here is the grief. — It is but writing! — My pen is a leaden one, and it is with some difficulty I trail it on to assure you of my being most cordially,

Yours,

LAWRENCE STERNE.
LET-

LETTER VIII.

To * * * * *

I have not been a furlong from Shandyhall since I wrote to you last;—but why is my pen so perverse? I have been to ****, and my errand was of so peculiar a nature, that I must give you an account of it. — You will scarce believe me, when I tell you, it was to outjuggle a juggling attorney; to put craft, and all its power, to defiance; and to obtain justice from one — who has a heart foul enough to take advantage of the mistakes of honest simplicity, and who has raised a considerable fortune by artifice and injustice. However, I gained my point! — It was a star and garter to me! — the matter was as follows: —

“A poor man, the father of my Vestal, having, by the sweat of his brow, during a course of many laborious years, saved a small sum of money, applied to this scribe to put it out to use for him: this was done, and a bond given for the money. — The honest man, having no place in his cottage which he thought sufficiently secure, put it in a hole in the thatch, which had served instead of a strong box, to keep his money.—In this situation the bond remained till the time of receiving his interest drew nigh. — But, alas! — the rain which had done no mischief to his gold, had found
“out

“out his paper security, and had rotted it to pieces!” — It would be a difficult matter to paint the distress of the old countryman upon this discovery; — he came to me weeping, and begging my advice and assistance! — it cut me to the heart!

Frame to yourself the picture of a man upwards of sixty years of age, — who having with much penury and more toil, with the addition of a small legacy, scraped together about fourscore pounds to support him in the infirmities of old age, and to be a little portion for his child when he should be dead and gone — lost his little hoard at once; and to aggravate his misfortune, through his own neglect and incaution. — “If I was young, Sir, said he, my affliction would have been light — and I might have obtained it again! — but I have lost my comfort when I most wanted it! — My staff is taken from me when I cannot go alone; and I have nothing to expect, in future life, but the unwilling charity of a Parish-Officer.” — Never, in my whole life, did I wish to be rich, with so good a grace, as at this time! — What a luxury it would have been to have said, to this afflicted fellow-creature, — “There is thy money — go thy ways — and be at peace,” — But, alas! the Shandy family were never much encumbered with money; and I, the poorest of them all, could only assist him with good counsel: — but I did not stop here. — I went myself with him to * * * * *, where by persuasion,

tion, threats, and some art, which, by-the-bye, in such a cause, and with such an opponent, was very justifiable — I sent my poor client back to his home, with his comfort and his bond restored to him. — Bravo! — Bravo! —

If a man has a right to be proud of any thing, — it is of a good action, done, as it ought to be, without any base interest lurking at the bottom of it. — Adieu — Adieu —

LAWRENCE STERNE.

LETTER IX.

To Mrs. V —.

Of the two bad cassocs, fair lady, which I am worth in the world, I would this moment freely give the latter of them to find out by what irresistible force of magic it is, that I am influenced to write a letter to you, upon so short an acquaintance. — Short — did I say? — I unsay it again — I have been acquainted with Mrs. V — this long and many a day: for, surely, the most penetrating of her sex need not be told, that intercourses of this kind are not to be dated by hours, days, or months — but

— but by the slow or rapid progress of our intimacies, which are measured only by the degrees of penetration, by which we discover characters at once— or by the openness and frankness of heart which lets the observer into it without the pains of reflection: either of these spares us what a short life could ill afford — and that is the long and unconscionable time in forming connections, which had much better be spent in tasting the sweets of them. — Now of this frame and contexture is the fair Mrs. V — ; her character is to be read at once — I saw it before I had walked twenty paces beside her — I believe, in my conscience, dear lady, if truth was known, that you have no inside at all,

That you are graceful, elegant; and desirable, &c. &c. — every common beholder who can stare at you, as a Dutch boor does at the Queen of Sheba, — can easily find out — but that you are sensible, gentle and tender, and from one end to the other of you full of the sweetest tones and modulations, requires a deeper research. — You are a system of harmonic vibrations — the softest and best attuned of all instruments. — Lord! I would give away my other cassock to touch you — But in giving my last rag of priesthood for that pleasure, I should be left naked — to say nothing of being quite disordered — so divine a hand as your's would presently put me into orders again — but if you suppose this would leave me as you found me, believe me, dear Mrs. V—, you

you are much mistaken! — All this being duly put together, pray, dear lady, let me ask you; What business you had to come here from —? or, to speak more to the purpose, what business have you to return back again? — The deuce take you with your musical and other powers; could nothing serve you, but you must turn Tristram Shandy's head, as if it was not turned enough already; — as for your turning my heart — I forgive you, as you have been so good as to turn it towards so excellent and heavenly an object. —

Now, dear Mrs, V —, if you can help it, do not think of yourself —

But believe me to be,

With the highest esteem

For your character and self,

Your's,

LAWRENCE STERNE.

 LETTER X.

To * * * * *

I snatch half an hour, while my dinner is getting ready, to tell you I am thus far on my way to Shandy-hall: — two more stages and I shall be at the end of a tedious journey. — Report, for the fourth time, has numbered me with the dead; — and it was generally believed in this part of the world, that my bones were laid in classic ground. — This I do not much wonder at; — for, to make the best of it, my constitution is but a scurvy one, and to keep the machine a going a little longer, has been the only motive for my running away from my friends and my country so much as I have done of late; — though weak as it is, it has some how or other weathered more storms than many a stouter one has been able to do; — could I but transform myself into a bird of passage, and go and come with the summer! — I think I should give the lie to a few more reports of this nature, — before I am called in good earnest to make a report of myself and all my actions to the Being who made me.

The book of engravings, which I left with you, I must recommend to your care for a few weeks longer: — nay, — if you think they are worthy your acceptance — keep them for ever! — for to tell you the truth, I have now no occasion for them: — this
is

is rather an ungracious way of making an offering, but you will excuse me when I tell you, — that the dear young lady, at whose feet I intended to lay them down, — and for whose sake I had preserved them with so much care, is gone to that country, from whence no one returns. — Genius, — wit, beauty, — goodness, — all, all were united in her! — Every virtue, — every grace! — I could write for ever on such a theme, — but I must have done.

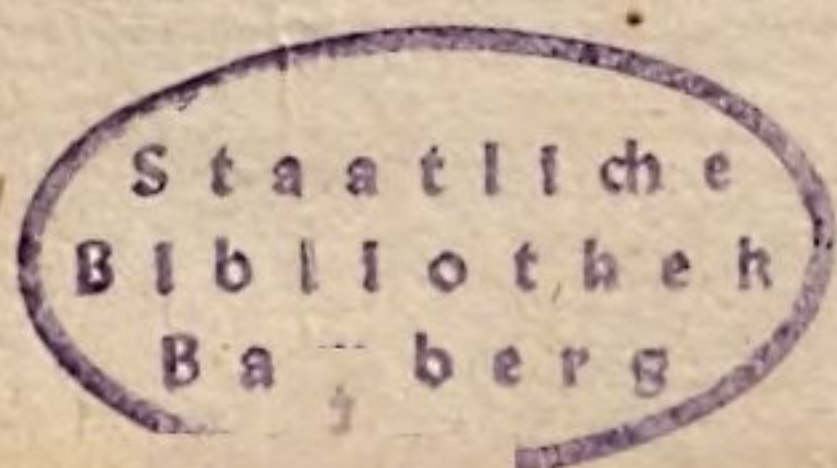
Surely the pleasures which arise from contemplating such characters, — embracing the urn which contains their ashes, — and shedding the tears of friendship over it — are far, far superior to the highest joys of sense, — or sensuality.

If you do not like the last word, — I pray you be so kind as to scratch it out; — for that is a liberty I have never yet ventured to take myself with any thing I write.

Adieu, — adieu —

Yours most truly,

LAWRENCE STERNE.



LETTER XI.

To * * * * *

— I beheld her tender look — her pathetic eye petrified my fluids — the liquid desolation drowned those once-bright orbs — the late sympathetic features, so pleasing in their harmony, are now blasted — withered — and are dead; — her charms are dwindled into a melancholy, which demands my pity. — Yes — my friend — our once sprightly and vivacious Harriot is that very object that must thrill your soul. — How abandoned is that heart which bulges the tear of innocence, and is the cause, — the fatal cause of overwhelming the spotless soul and plunging the yet-untainted mind into a sea of sorrow and repentance — Though born to protect the fair, does not man act the part of a Demon? — first alluring by his temptations, and then triumphing in his victory — when villany gets the ascendancy it seldom leaves the wretch 'till it has thoroughly polluted him

— T * * * * *, once the joyous companion of our juvenile extravagances, by a deep-laid scheme, so far ingratiated himself into the good graces of the old man — that even he, with all his penetration and experience, of which old folks generally pique themselves, could not perceive his drift, and, like the goodness of his own heart, believed him honourable: — had I known his pretensions — I would have flown on the wings of friendship — of regard — of affection — and rescued the lovely innocent from

from the hands of the spoiler: — be not alarmed at my declaration — I have been long bound to her in the reciprocal bonds of affection; — but it is of a more delicate stamp, than the gross materials, nature has planted in us for procreation. — I hope ever to retain the idea of innocence and love her still: — I would love the whole sex were they equally deserving.

—— taking her by the hand — the other thrown round her waist — after an intimacy allowing such freedoms — with a look deceitfully pleasing, the villain poured out a torrent of protestations — and, though oaths are sacred, — swore, with all the fortitude of a conscientious man, — the depth of his love — the height of his esteem — the strength of his attachment; — by these, and other artful means to answer his abandoned purpose, for which you know he is but too-well qualified, — gained on the open inexperienced heart of the generous Harriot, and robbed her of her brightest jewel. — Oh, England! where are your senators? — where are your laws? — Ye Heavens! where rests your deadly thunder? — why are your bolts restrained from o'erwhelming with vengeance this vile seducer. — I, — my friend, — I, was the minister sent by justice to revenge her wrongs, — revenge? — I disclaim it — to redress her wrongs. — The news of affliction flies — I heard it, and posted to ** **, where forgetting my character, — this is the stile of the enthusiast — it most became

my character — I saw him in his retreat — I flew out of the chaise — caught him by the collar — and in a tumult of passion — demanded: — sure, if anger is excusable, it must be when it is exerted by a detestation of vice; — I demanded him to restore: — alas! what was not in his power to return — Vengeance! — and shall these vermin — these spoilers of the fair — these murderers of the mind — lurk and creep about in dens, secure to themselves and pillage all around them? — Distracted with my rage, I charged him with his crime — exploded his baseness — condemned his villany; — while coward guilt sat on his fullen brow, and, like a criminal conscious of his deed, tremblingly pronounced his fear. — He hoped means might be found for a sufficient atonement — offered a tender of his hand as a satisfaction, and a life devoted to her service as a recompence for his error. — His humiliation struck me — 'twas the only means he could have contrived to assuage my anger. — I hesitated — paused — thought — and still must think on so important a concern: — assist me — I am half afraid of trusting my Harriot in the hands of a man, whose character I too well know to be the antipodes of Harriot's. — He all fire and dissipation; — she all meekness and sentiment! — nor can I think there is any hopes of reformation; — the offer proceeds more from surprise or fear, than justice and sincerity. — The world — the world will exclaim, and my Harriot be a cast-off from society. — Let her! — I had rather see her
thus

thus, than miserably linked for life to a lump of vice! — She shall retire to some corner of the world, and there weep out the remainder of her days in sorrow — forgetting the wretch who has abused her confidence, but ever remembering the friend who consoles her in retirement — You, my dear Charles, shall bear a part with me in the delightful task of whispering “peace to those who are in trouble, and “healing the broken in spirit,”

Adieu,

LAWRENCE STERNE.

LETTER XII.

To * * * * *

S I R!

I feel the weight of obligation which your friendship has laid upon me, and if it should never be in my power to make you a recompence, I hope you will be recompensed at the “Resurrection of the “just,” — I hope, Sir, we shall both be found in that catalogue; — and we are encouraged to hope, by the example of Abraham’s faith, even “Against hope.” — I think there is, at least, as much probability of our reaching, and rejoicing in the “Heaven

“where we would be,” as there was of the old Patriarch’s having a child by his old wife. — There is not any person living or dead, whom I have so strong a desire to see and converse with as yourself: — indeed I have no inclination to visit, or say a syllable to but a few persons in this lower vale of vanity and tears besides you; — but I often derive a peculiar satisfaction in conversing with the ancient and modern dead, — who yet live and speak excellently in their works. — My neighbours think often alone, — and yet at such times I am in company with more than five hundred mutes — each of whom, at my pleasure, communicates his ideas to me by dumb signs — quite as intelligibly as any person living can do by uttering of words. — They always keep the distance from me which I direct, — and, with a motion of my hand, I can bring them as near to me as I please. — I lay hands on fifty of them sometimes in an evening, and handle them as I like: — they never complain of ill-usage, — and when dismissed from my presence, — though ever so abruptly, — take no offence. Such convenience is not to be enjoyed — nor such liberty to be taken — with the living: — we are bound — in point of good-manners to admit all our pretended friends when they knock for an entrance, and dispense with all the nonsense or impertinence which they broach ’till they think proper to withdraw: nor can we take the liberty of humbly and decently opposing their sentiments without exciting their disgust, and being in dan-

danger of their splenetic representation after they have left us.

I am weary of talking to the many, — who, though quick of hearing — are so “Slow of heart to believe” — propositions which are next to self-evident; — you and I were not cast in one mould, — corporal comparison will attest it, — and yet we are fashioned so much alike, that we may pass for twins: — were it possible to take an inventory of all our sentiments and feelings — just and unjust — holy and impure — there would appear as little difference between them, as there is between instinct and reason; — or — wit and madness, the barriers which separate these — like the real essence of bodies — escape the piercing eye of metaphysicks, and cannot be pointed out more clearly, than geometers define a strait line, which is said to have length without breadth. — O ye learned anatomical aggregates, who pretend to instruct other aggregates! be as candid as the sage, whom ye pretend to revere — and tell them, that all you know is, that you know nothing!

—— I have a mort to communicate to you on different subjects — my mountain will be in labour ’till I see you — and then — what then? — why you must expect to see it bring forth — a mouse. — I therefore beseech you to have a watchful eye to the cats; — but it is said that mice were designed to be killed by cats. — Cats to be worried by dogs, &c. &c. — This may be true — and I think I am

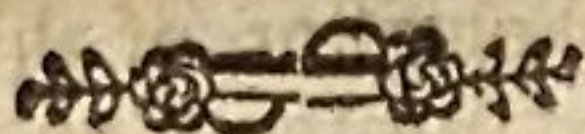
made to be killed by my cough, — which is a perpetual plague to me ; what, in the name of sound lungs, has my cough to do with you — or — you with my cough?

I am, Sir, with the most

Perfect affection and esteem,

Your humble Servant,

LAWRENCE STERNE.



THE HISTORY
 OF A
 WATCH COAT
 WITH
 EXPLANATORY NOTES.

YORICK to * * *

In my last, for want of something better to write about, I told you what a world of fending and proving we have had of late, in this little * village of ours, about an old cast-off pair of black plush-breeches, which † John, our parish clerk, about ten years ago, it seems, had made a promise of to one Trim ††, who is our sexton and dog-whipper. — To this you write me word, that you have had more than either one or two occasions to know a good deal of the shifty behavior of the said master Trim, — and that you are astonished, nor can you for your soul conceive, how so worthless a fellow, and so worthless a thing into the bargain, could become the occasion of so much racket as I have represented. —

Now, though you do not say expressly, you could wish to hear any more about it, yet I see plainly enough I have raised your curiosity, and therefore,
 from

* York. † Dr. Fount—n, Dean of York. †† Dr.
 T—ph-m.

from the same motive that I slightly mentioned it at all in my last letter, I will in this give you a full and very circumstantial account of the whole affair.

But, before I begin, I must first set you right in one very material point, in which I have misled you, as to the true cause of all this uproar amongst us — which does not take its rise, as I then told you, from the affair of the breeches, but, on the contrary, the whole affair of the breeches has taken its rise from it. — To understand which, you must know, that the first beginning of the squabble was not between John the parish-clerk and Trim the sexton, but betwixt the * parson of the parish and the said master Trim, about an old watch-coat that had hung up many years in the church, which Trim had set his heart upon; and nothing would serve Trim, but he must take it home in order to have it converted into a warm underpetticoat for his wife, and a jerkin for himself against winter; which, in a plaintive tone, he most humbly begged his reverence would consent to.

I need not tell you, Sir, who have so often felt it, that a principle of strong compassion transports a generous mind sometimes beyond what is strictly right; — the parson was within an ace of being an honourable example of this very crime; — for no sooner did the distinct words — petticoat — poor wife — warm — winter, strike upon his ear, — but his heart

* Apb. H-tt-n.

heart warmed — and before Trim had well got to the end of his petition, being a gentleman of a frank open temper, he told him he was welcome to it with all his heart and soul. — But, Trim, says he, as you see I am but just got down to my living, and am an utter stranger to all parish matters, knowing nothing about this old watch-coat, you beg of me, having never seen it in my life, and therefore cannot be a judge whether 'tis fit for such a purpose, or, if it is, in truth know not whether 'tis mine to bestow upon you or not, — you must have a week or ten days patience, till I can make some inquiries about it — and, if I find it is in my power, I tell you again, man, your wife is heartily welcome to an under-petticoat out of it, and you to a jerkin, was the thing as good again as you represent it.

It is necessary to inform you, Sir, in this place, that the parson was earnestly bent to serve Trim in this affair, not only from the motive of generosity, which I have justly ascribed to him, but likewise from another motive, and that was by making some sort of recompence for a multitude of small services which Trim had occasionally done, and indeed was continually doing, as he was much about the house, when his own man was out of the way. — For all these reasons together, I say, the parson of the parish intended to serve Trim in this matter to the utmost of his power. — All that was wanting, was previously to inquire if any one had a claim to it, or whether,

as it had time immemorial hung up in the church, the taking it down might not raise a clamour in the parish. These inquiries were the things that Trim dreaded in his heart. — He knew very well, that, if the parson should but say one word to the churchwardens about it, there would be an end of the whole affair. For this, and some other reasons not necessary to be told you at present, Trim was for allowing no time in this matter; — but on the contrary doubled his diligence and importunity at the vicaragehouse — plagued the whole family to death — prest his suit morning, noon, and night, and, to shorten my story, teased the poor gentleman, who was but in an ill state of health, almost out of his life about it.

You will not wonder when I tell you, that all this hurry and precipitation, on the side of master Trim, produced its natural effect on the side of the parson, and that was a suspicion that all was not right at the bottom.

He was one evening sitting alone in his study, weighing and turning this doubt every way in his mind, and after an hour and a half's serious deliberation upon the affair, and running over Trim's behaviour throughout — he was just saying to himself — it must be so; — when a sudden rap at the door put an end to his soliloquy, and in a few minutes to his doubts too; for a labourer in the town, who deemed himself past his fifty-second year, had been returned by the constables in the militia list — and he
had

had come with a groat in his hand to search the parish-register for his age. The parson bid the poor fellow put the groat into his pocket, and go into the kitchen — then shutting the study door, and taking down the parish register — who knows, says he, but I may find something here about this selfsame watch-coat? He had scarce unclasped the book, in saying this, when he popped on the very thing he wanted, fairly wrote in the first page, pasted to the inside of one of the covers, whereon was a memorandum about the very thing in question in these express words:— M e m o r a n d u m. “The
 “great watch-coat was purchased and given, above
 “two hundred years ago, by the lord of the manor
 “to this parish church, to the sole use and behoof
 “of the poor sextons thereof, and their successors for
 “ever, to be worn by them respectively in winterly
 “cold nights in ringing complines, passing
 “bells, &c. which the said lord of the manor had
 “done in piety to keep the poor wretches warm,
 “and for the good of his own soul, for which they
 “were directed to pray, &c.” Just heaven! said the parson to himself looking upwards, what an escape have I had! give this for an under-petticoat to Trim’s wife! I would not have consented to such a defecration to be Primate of all England — nay, I would not have disturbed a single button of it for all my tithes.

Scarce

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when in pops Trim with the whole subject of the exclamation under both his arms — I say under both his arms — for he had actually got it ript and cut out ready, his own jerkin under one arm, and the petticoat under the other, in order to carry to the taylor to be made up, and had just stepped in, in high spirits, to shew the parson how cleverly it had held out.

There are now many good families subsisting in the world, but which I have neither time to recollect or look for, which would give you a strong conception of the astonishment and honest indignation which this unexpected stroke of Trim's impudence impressed upon the parson's looks — let it suffice to say, that it exceeded all fair description — as well as all power of proper resentment — except this, that Trim was ordered, in a stern voice, to lay the bundles down upon the table — to go about his business, and wait upon him, at his peril, the next morning at eleven precisely. — Against this hour, like a wise man, the parson had sent to desire John the parish clerk, who bore an exceeding good character as a man of truth, and who, having moreover a pretty freehold of about eighteen pounds a year in the township, was a leading man in it; and, upon the whole, was such a one of whom it might be said, that he rather did honour to his office than that his office did honour to him, — him he sends for with the churchwardens and one

one of the fidefmen, a grave, knowing old man, to be present — for, as Trim had withheld the whole truth from the parson touching the watch-coat, he thought it probable he would as certainly do the same thing to others. Tho' this, I said, was wise, the trouble of the precaution might have been spared, — because the parson's character was unblemished, — and he had ever been held by the world in the estimation of a man of honour and integrity. — Trim's character on the contrary was as well known, if not in the world at least in all the parish, to be that of a little, dirty, pimping, pettyfogging, ambidextrous fellow; — who neither cared what he did or said of any, provided he could get a penny by it. This might, I said, have made any precaution needless, — but you must know, as the parson had in a manner but just got down to his living, he dreaded the consequences of the least ill impression on his first entrance among his parishioners, which would have disabled him from doing them the good he wished — so that out of regard to his flock, more than the necessary care due to himself — he was resolved not to lie at the mercy of what resentment might vent, or malice lend an ear to. —

Accordingly the whole matter was rehearsed, from first to last, by the parson, in the manner I've told you, in the hearing of John the parish clerk, and in the presence of Trim.

Trim had little to say for himself, except “that the parson had absolutely promised to befriend him

H

and

and his wife in the affair to the utmost of his power; that the watch-coat was certainly in his power, and that he might still give it him if he pleased."

To this the parson's reply was short, but strong, "That nothing was in his power to do but what he could do honestly, — that, in giving the coat to him and his wife, he should do a manifest wrong to the next sexton, the great watch-coat being the most comfortable part of the place; — that he should moreover injure the right of his own successor, who would be just so much a worse patron as the worth of the coat amounted to, and, in a word, he declared, that his whole intent in promising that coat was charity to Trim, but wrong to no man, — that was a reserve, he said, made in all cases of this kind: and he declared solemnly, in verbo sacerdotis, that this was his meaning, and was so understood by Trim himself."

With the weight of this truth, and the great good sense and strong reason, which accompanied all the parson said on the subject, — poor Trim was driven to his last shift — and begged he might be suffered to plead his right and title to the watch-coat, if not by promise, at least by servitude. — It was well known how much he was intitled to it upon these scores: that he had black'd the parson's shoes without count, and greased his boots above fifty times — that he had run for eggs in the town upon all occasions — whetted the knives at all hours — caught his horse, and rubbed him down — that, for his wife, she

she had been ready upon all occasions to char for them; and neither he nor she, to the best of his remembrance, ever took a farthing, or any thing beyond a mug of ale. — To this account of his services, he begged leave to add those of his wishes, which, he said, had been equally great. — He affirmed, and was ready he said, to make it appear, by a number of witnesses, “he had drank his reverence’s health a thousand times, by the bye he did not add out of the parson’s own ale, — that he had not only drank his health but wished it, and never came to the house but asked his man kindly how he did; that in particular, about half a year ago, when his reverence cut his finger in paring an apple, he went half a mile to ask a cunning woman what was good to staunch blood, and actually returned with a cobweb in his breeches pocket. Nay, says Trim, it was not a fortnight ago, when your reverence took that strong purge, that I went to the far end of the whole town to borrow you a closetool — and came back, as the neighbours, who flouted, me will all bear witness, with the pan upon my head, and never thought it too much.” Trim concluded this pathetic remonstrance with saying “he hoped his reverence’s heart would not suffer him to requite so many faithful services by so unkind a return: — that if it was so, as he was the first, so he hoped he should be the last example of a man of his condition so treated.” This plan of Trim’s defence which Trim had put himself upon, could admit of no other reply than general smile. — Upon the

whole, let me inform you, that all that could be said pro and con, on both sides, being fairly heard, it was plain that Trim in every part of this affair had behaved very ill — and one thing, which was never expected to be known of him, happened in the course of this debate to come out against him, namely, that he had gone and told the parson, before he had ever set foot in his parish, that John his parish clerk — his church-wardens, and some of the heads of the parish, were a parcel of scoundrels. — Upon the upshot, Trim was kick'd out of doors, and told at his peril never to come there again.

At first, Trim huff'd and bounced most terribly, — swore he would get a warrant, — that nothing would serve him but he would call a bye-law, and tell the whole parish how the parson had misused him; but cooling of that, as fearing the parson might possibly bind him over to his good behaviour, and, for aught he knew, might send him to the house of correction, he lets the parson alone, and to revenge himself falls foul upon the clerk, who had no more to do in the quarrel than you or I; — rips up the promise of the old — cast — pair of black — plush — breeches; and raises an uproar in the town about it, notwithstanding it had slept ten years — but all this, you must know, is looked upon in no other light but as an artful stroke of generalship in Trim to raise a dust, and cover himself under the disgraceful chastisement he has undergone. —

If

If your curiosity is not yet satisfied — I will now proceed to relate the battle of the breeches in the same exact manner I have done that of the watch-coat. —

Be it known then, that about ten years ago, when John was appointed parish-clerk of this church, this said Trim took no small pains to get into John's good graces, in order, as it afterwards appeared, to coax a promise out of him of a pair of breeches, which John had then by him, of black plush, not much the worse for wearing. — Trim only begged, for God's sake, to have them bestowed upon him, when John should think fit to cast them. —

Trim was one of those kind of men who loved a bit of finery in his heart, and would rather have a tatter'd rag of a better body's, than the best plain whole thing his wife could spin him.

John, who was naturally unsuspicious, made no more difficulty of promising the breeches than the parson had done in promising the great coat; and indeed with something less reserve, — because the breeches were John's own, and he could give them, without wrong, to whom he thought fit.

It happened, I was going to say unluckily, but I should rather say most luckily, for Trim, for he was the only gainer by it, that a quarrel, about some six or eight weeks after this, broke out betwixt the late parson of the parish and John the clerk. Somebody, and it was thought to be nobody but Trim, had put it into the parson's head, "that John's desk

in the church was at the least four inches higher than it should be — that the thing gave offence, and was indecorous, inasmuch as it approached too near upon a level with the parson's desk itself." — This hardship the parson complained of loudly, and told John, one day after prayers, "he could bear it no longer, — and would have it altered, and brought down as it should be." John made no other reply, but "that the desk was not of his raising: — that 'twas not one hair breadth higher than he found it, — and that as he found it so he would leave it. — In short, he would neither make an encroachment, neither would he suffer one." — The * late parson might have his virtues, but the leading part of his character was not humility, — so that John's stiffness in this point was not likely to reconcile matters. — This was Trim's harvest.

After a friendly hint to John to stand his ground, away hies Trim to make his market at the vicarage. — What passed there I will not say, intending not to be uncharitable; so shall content myself with only guessing at it from the sudden change that appeared in Trim's dress for the better, — for he had left his old ragged coat, hat, and wig, in the stable, and was come forth strutting across the churchyard, yclad in a good charitable cast coat, large hat, and wig, which the parson had just given him. — Ho! ho! hollo! John, cries Trim, in an insolent bravo, as loud as ever he could bawl — see here,

* Abp. H—rr—g

here, my lad, how fine I am. — The more shame for you, answered John seriously. — Do you think, Trim, says he, such finery, gained, by such services, becomes you, or can wear well? — Fy upon it, Trim, I could not have expected this from you, considering what friendship you pretended, and how kind I have ever been to you; — how many shillings, and sixpences, I have generously lent you in your distresses. — Nay, it was but the other day that I promised you these black plush breeches I have on. — Rot your breeches, quoth Trim, for Trim's brain was half turn'd with his new finery, rot your breeches, says he, — I would not take them up were they laid at my door — give them, and be d—d to you, to whom you like. — I would have you to know I can have a better pair of the parson's any day in the week. — John told him plainly, as his word had once passed him, he had a spirit above taking advantage of his insolence in giving them away to another; — but, to tell him his mind freely, he thought he had got so many favours of that kind, and was so likely to get many more for the same services, of the parson, that he had better give up the breeches, with good nature, to some one, who would be more thankful for them.

Here John mentioned * Mark Slender, who it seems the day before had asked John for them, not knowing they were under promise to Trim. — “Come, Trim, says he, let poor Mark have them,

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—you

* Dr. Braith—t.

— you know he has not a pair to his a —, besides, you see he is just of my size, and they will fit to a T, whereas if I give 'em to you, look ye, they are not worth much, and besides, you could not get your backside into them, if you had them, without tearing them all to pieces." — Every tittle of this was most undoubtedly true, for Trim, you must know, by foul feeding, and playing the good-fellow at the parson's, was grown somewhat gross about the lower parts, if not higher; so that, as all John said upon the occasion was fact, Trim with much ado, and after a hundred hums and hahs, at last, out of mere compassion to Mark, "sings, seals, and delivers up ALL RIGHT, Interest, and pretensions, whatsoever, in and to the said breeches, thereby binding his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, never more to call the said claim in QUESTION." — All this renunciation was set forth, in an ample manner, to be in pure pity to Mark's nakedness; — but the secret was, Trim had an eye to, and firmly expected, in his own mind the great green pulpit-cloth, and old velvet cushion, which were that very year to be taken down, — which, by the by, could he have wheedled John a second time, as he had hoped, would have made up the loss of the breeches seven fold.

Now, you must know, this pulpitcloth and cushion were not in John's gift, but in the church-wardens, &c. However, as I said above, that John was a leading man in the parish, Trim knew he could help him

him to 'em if he would; — but John had got a surfeit of him, — so, when the pulpit-cloth, &c. were taken down, they were immediately given, John having a great say in it, to * William Doe, who understood very well what use to make of them.

As for the old breeches, poor Mark lived to wear them but a short time, and they got into the possession of Lorry Slim †, an unlucky wight, by whom they are still worn, — in truth, as you will guess, they are very thin by this time.

But Lorry has a light heart, and what recommends them to him is this, that, as thin as they are, he knows that Trim, let him say what he will to the contrary, still envies the possessor of them, and with all his pride would be very glad to wear them after him.

Upon this footing have these affairs slept quietly for near ten years — and would have slept for ever, but for the unlucky kicking out, which, as I said, has ripped this squabble up afresh; so that it was no longer ago than last week, that Trim met and insulted John in the public town-way before a hundred people, tax'd him with the promise of the old cast pair of black breeches, notwithstanding Trim's solemn renunciation — twitted him with the pulpitcloth and velvet cushion — as good as told him he was ignorant of the common duties of his clerkship; adding, very insolently, that he knew not so much as to give out a common psalm in tune.

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John

* Mr. Birdm—e. † Lawrence Sterne.

John contended himself by giving a plain answer to every article that Trim had laid to his charge, and appealed to his neighbours, who remembered the whole affair, — and, as he knew there was never any thing to be got by wrestling with a chimney-sweeper, he was going to take his leave of Trim for ever. But hold — the mob by this time had got round them, and their high mightinesses insisted upon having Trim tried upon the spot. —

Trim was accordingly tried, and, after a full hearing, was convicted a second time, and handled more roughly by one or more of them, than even at the parson's. —

Trim, says one, are you not ashamed of yourself to make all this rout and disturbance in the town, and set neighbours together by the ears, about an old — worn — out — pair of cast — breeches not worth half a crown? Is there a cast coat, or a place in the whole town, that will bring you in a shilling, but what you have snapped up like a greedy hound as you are. —

In the first place, are you not sexton and dog-whipper, worth three pounds a year? Then you begged the church-wardens to let your wife have the washing and darning of the churchlinen, which brings you in thirteen shillings and fourpence; then you have six shillings and eightpence for oiling and winding up the clock, both paid you at Easter — the pounder's place, which is worth forty shillings a year, you have got that too; — you are the bailiff, which the

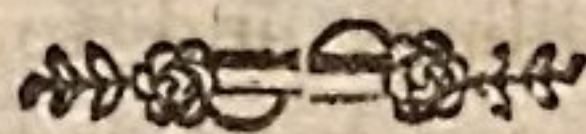
the late parson got you, which brings you in forty shillings more,

Besides all this, you have six pounds a year, paid you quarterly, for being molecatcher to the parish. Aye, says the luckless wight above-mentioned, who was standing close by him, with the plush breeches on, "you are not only molecatcher, Trim, but you catch STRAY CONIES too in the dark, and you pretend a licence for it, which, I trow, will be looked into at the next quarter sessions." I maintain it, I have a licence, says Trim, blushing as red as scarlet, — I have a licence, and, as I farm a warren in the next parish, I will catch conies every hour of the night. You catch conies! says a toothless old woman just passing by.

This set the mob a laughing, and sent every man home in perfect good humour, except Trim, who waddled very slowly off with that kind of inflexible gravity only to be equalled by one animal in the creation, and surpassed by none.

I am,

Sir, yours, &c. &c.



POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

I have broke open my letter to inform you, that I missed the opportunity of sending it by the messenger, who, I expected, would have called upon me in his return through this village to York; so it has lain a week or ten days by me.— I am not sorry for the disappointment, because something has since happened, in continuation of this affair, which I am thereby enabled to transmit to you all under one trouble.

When I finished the above account, I thought, as did every soul in the parish, Trim had met with so thorough a rebuff from John the parish clerk, and the town's folks, who all took against him, that Trim would be glad to be quiet, and let the matter rest.

But, it seems, it is not half an hour ago since Trim sallied forth again, and, having borrowed a fowgelder's horn, with hard blowing he got the whole town round him, and endeavoured to raise a disturbance, and fight the whole battle over again, — alleged that he had been used in the last fray worse than a dog, not by John the parish clerk, for I should not, quoth Trim, have valued him a rush single-hands, — but all the town sided with him, and twelve men in buckram set upon me, all at once, and kept me in play at sword's point for three hours together.

Besides, quoth Trim, there were two misbegotten knaves in Kendal green, who lay all the while
in

in ambush in John's own house, and let drive at me all together — a plague, says Trim, of all cowards.

Trim repeated this story above a dozen times, which made some of the neighbours pity him, thinking the poor fellow craked-brained, and that he actually believed what he said.

After this Trim dropped the affair of the breeches, and began a fresh dispute about the reading-desk, which I told you had occasioned some small dispute between the late parson and John some years ago. — This reading-desk, as you will observe, was but an episode wove into the main story by the bye, for the main affair was the battle of the breeches and the great coat.

However Trim being at last driven out of these two citadels, — he has seized hold, in his retreat, of this reading-desk, with a view, as it seems, to take shelter behind it.

I cannot say but the man has fought it out obstinately enough, and, had his cause been good, I should have really pitied him. For, when he was driven out of the great watch-coat, you see he did not run away; no — he retreated behind the breeches; and, when he could make nothing of it behind the breeches, he got behind the reading-desk. To what other hold Trim will next retreat, the politicians of this village are not agreed. Some think his next move will be towards the rear of the parson's boot; but, as it is thought he cannot make a
long

long stand there, others are of opinion, that Trim will once more in his life get hold of the parson's horse, and charge upon him, or perhaps behind him: but, as the horse is not easy to be caught, the more general opinion is, that, when he is driven out of the readingdesk, he will make his last retreat in such a manner, as, if possible, to gain the clofestoole, and defend himself behind it to the very last drop.

If Trim should make this movement, by my advice he should be left, beside his citadel, in full possession of the field of battle, where 'tis certain he will keep every body a league off, and may hop by himself till he is weary. Besides, as Trim seems bent upon purging himself, and may have abundance of foul humours to work off, I think he cannot be better placed.

But this is all matter of speculation. — Let me carry you back to matter of fact, and tell you what king of stand Trim has actually made behind the said desk: “Neighbours and townsmen all, I will be sworn before my lord mayor, that John and his nineteen men in buckram have abused me worse than a dog; for they told you that I play'd fast and go loose with the late parson and him in that old dispute of theirs about the readingdesk, and that I made matters worse between them and not better.”

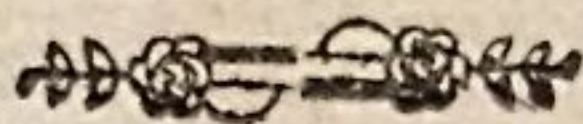
Of this charge Trim declared he was as innocent as the child that was unborn, — that he would be book-sworn he had no hand in it.

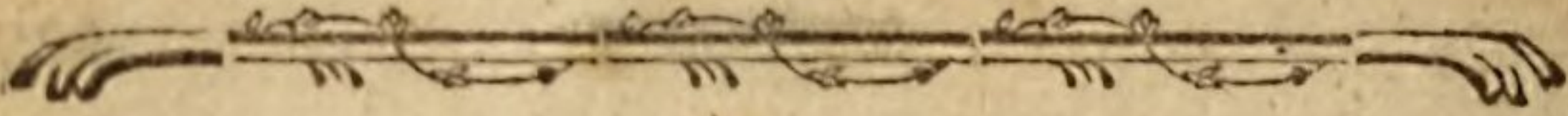
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He produced a strong witness, and moreover insinuated, that John himself, instead of being angry for what he had done in it, had actually thanked him. — Aye, Trim, says the wight in the plush-breeches, but that was, Trim, the day before John found thee out. Besides, Trim, there is nothing in that, for the very year that you was made town's pounder, thou knowest well that I both thanked thee myself, and moreover gave thee a good warm supper for turning John Lund's cows and horses out of my hard corn close, which if thou hadst not done, as thou toldst me, I should have lost my whole crop; whereas John Lund and Thomas Patt, who are both here to testify, and are both willing to take their oaths on't, that thou thyself was the very man who set the gate open — and after all, it was not thee, Trim, 'twas the blacksmith's poor lad who turned them out — so that a man may be thanked and rewarded too for a good turn which he never did, nor ever did intend.

Trim could not sustain this unexpected stroke; — so Trim marched off the field without colours flying, or any other ensigns of honour whatever. — Whether after this Trim intends to rally a second time — or whether he may not take it into his head to claim the victory, — none but Trim himself can inform you.

However, the general opinion upon the whole is this, that, in three several pitch'd battles, Trim has been so trimm'd, as never disastrous hero was trimm'd before.





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Sterne, Laurence,

Letters written between Yorick and Eliza with Sterne's letters to his
friends

London 1788

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